

**STATE, SOCIETY AND ECONOMY: EVOLUTION STUDY
OF THE KONGU REGION (WESTERN TAMIL NADU)
FROM THE 6TH CENTURY TO THE 16TH CENTURY**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of*

Doctor of Philosophy

S. GUNASEKARAN



Centre for Historical Studies

**School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi**

December-2007

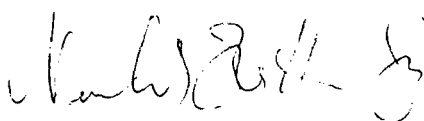


CERTIFICATE

I do hereby declare that the thesis entitled, 'State, Society and Economy: Evolution Study of the Kongu Region (Western Tamil Nadu) from the 6th Century to the 16th Century' submitted by me is bona fide work and that it has not been submitted to any other university for the award of any other degree.


(S. Gunasekaran)

It is hereby recommended that the thesis may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


Chairperson
 CHAIRPERSON
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
(Prof. Neeladri Bhattacharya)
New Delhi-110 067, INDIA


Supervisor
 Centre for Historical Studies,
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110 067, INDIA
(Prof. Vijaya Ramaswamy)

to

My Father
S. Soundararajan
&

My teachers
Government Aided Middle School
Pushpavanam

Acknowledgment

The study is a result of fragmented expression of a long-cherished desire. When I wrote a term paper on 'State Vs Chieftdom: in Early Medieval south India' as part of my M.A course work at Pondicherry University, I did not foresee that it would evolve into a doctoral research. Initially, it took the shape of M.Phil dissertation under the title of 'Local History and State Formation in Kongu' at University of Hyderabad. I was besieged with uncertainties further my ambitions on the topic when I joined the Centre for Historical Studies at JNU. But the discussion with some members of the faculty in CHS obliterated my initial reluctance and helped me to push ahead with the theme. In this regard, I owe a deep sense of gratitude to my teachers, Dr. Venkata Rahoatham, Department of History, Pondicherry University; Prof. Aloka Prashar - Sen, Department of History, University of Hyderabad and Prof. B.D.Chattopdhyaya, JNU.

I am heavily indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Vijaya Ramasamy, who had to bear with the erratic ways of my research work and schedules. Renowned for her wisdom, dexterity and patience, she guided me at every step of my research. She built up my confidence and instilled a sense of persistence in me at a time when I was battling with naïve ideas and raw methodology. I can never forget her humane and kind-hearted disposition during the darkest period of my life— when my beloved father suddenly passed away and also when my family was totally devastated by Tsunami. She was always around to console and counsel in difficulties. I am highly indebted to her for all that she has done for me. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Smt. Sethu Ramasamy, Dr. C. Krishnan and the little one, Ram for their abounding concern and love.

My gratitude to Dr. Mahalakshmi, Dr. Kumkum Roy, Dr. Ranabir Chakravarti and Prof. Kunal Chakrabarti, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, for their valuable comments on my study and help at different junctures.

N. Govindaraju, Assistant Editor, Tamil Nadu State Archives handed over to me a bulk of valuable materials from his own personal collection. I acknowledge him with a deep sense of gratitude.

I thank Prof. James Heitzman, who introduced me to Dr. R. Rajagopal, State Archaeological Department, Tamil Nadu, who allowed me to use his personal library and, in his turn, introduced me to Dr. Poongunran and Y. Subbarayalu. With his immense experience and first-hand evidences Dr. Poongunran was able to give a great deal of insight. I used to bother him with my doubts and clarification. He also sent me some rare volumes on South Indian inscriptions. The brief discussion with Dr. Subbarayalu was highly absorbing and as insightful as his writings. I thank these eminent scholars with sincere gratitude.

I owe a debt of thanks to Prof. Rajan Gurukkal, who was kind enough to spend his valuable time and guided me in certain problematic areas of my study. I benefited immensely from the discussion with him.

Prof. K. Natchimuthu, Tamil Chair, JNU, was readily available to clear my doubts while reading the texts of copper plates and palm leaves. My profound thanks to him. I am also thankful to Mahalingam who introduced me with some leaders of Vellala and Vettuva communities. The oral sources received from them were immensely helpful for my study.

Mr. Pragyan Chaudhary surprised me with his passion for South Indian History. With a great degree of sincerity, he went through the drafts and helped me to give a final shape. I appreciate his timely help, for which I am indebted forever. V. Rajesh, IIT, Chennai, went through the draft and extended meaningful suggestions. I thank him for being with me at the crucial stage of the study.

S. Karmegam had been a source of sensible friendship and extended help from time to time, which may not be possible to list here. Sacrificing his own priorities, Saji M. Kadavil took care of the final formatting. And Anish R., rare combination of intellect and emotions, remained as a good friend. I acknowledge their support and express my sincere thanks to them.

A. Jayarani structured my bibliography, Deepa Palaniyappan ventured the tedious task of formatting the charts and Pintu Kumar painstakingly pointed out the missing page numbers of some references. Above all, they were always there to share my joys and sorrows. I am grateful to them for their genuine concern and steadfast companionship.

My sincere thanks to G. Manicandan, readily extended a helping hand whenever I was in trouble, and Suneetha showed an untold affection and concern.

I thank Dr. Koushik, who gave me his cycle and mobility that carried my life in the campus for five years. I thank to Dr. Ganapathy, who introduced me to some fine movies and made me understand that some movies are as much important as an academic article. I thank Mr. K. Thirunavukarasu because I am impressed by his dialogic vigor and debating sense.

My gratitude to Alankar, who was always there to suggest me to wear woollens at the break of every winter, Sathya, who showed a great patience to bear my broken Telugu and Vinod Sen, who mastered the art of short-cuts at the time of any urgency.

I thank my friends Rajesh Krishnan and Jai Krishna of Green Peace India who have brought all the discussions on environment related issues to my room. I extend my acknowledgement to Mr. T. Sanathanan, a remarkable person, R. Venkatesan, a fine human being and P. Gunasekaran, Venkat, V. Gunasekaran, Srinivasaraghavan and Tinu—friends with the sense of deep emotion.

I thank Mr. Kanniyappan, Assistant Librarian, JNU and Mrs. Shashi Kapoor and Mr. Dharmendra, office staff, CHS for their kind cooperation.

I thank Dr. Gangatharan for being a source of inspiration, Dr. Rambabu and G. Rose for their brotherly concern, B. R. Alamelu for her sisterly affection, Suresh Kumar, Annavaram, Sweta and Sharadha for extending their warmth of friendship.

I thank Prakash, who went through the early drafts of the thesis and I also owe a debt of thanks to Uma, who edited some of my previous writings.

I acknowledge the contribution of Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR) for sanctioning a financial grant, with out which the research would not have materialized.

JNU Tamil Study Circle had been a platform for exchanging ideas and I thank all the member of this group.

I thank my cousin Dr. V. Selvam, who had been with my family when I was away. I express a very personal thanks to my mother, Smt. S. Jothilakshmi for her endless blessings and support; I regret for not being with her when she underwent great mental and emotional turmoil, brother Ilamparuthi and, sister in law, Jayalakshmi, who still support me even though they are not clear what a five year Ph D research would mean, sister, Jayanthi, who regards me as a very trustworthy friend, and my nephew and niece, Vasanthan and Arunthatthi, their tender innocence that make them treat me as their playmate.

S. Gunasekaran

Contents

Chapter	Title	Page No.
	Acknowledgement	i
	List of Tables and Charts	iv
	Abbreviation	v
	Preliminaries: <i>In lieu</i> of an Introduction	1-13
I	A Review of Evolutionary Studies	14-43
II	Mapping the Region: Physical and Cultural Geography	44-59
III	Early Settlers and Emergence of Chiefdoms (up to 5 th CE)	60-90
IV	Towards the State: Stratification and Sedentarisation (6 th to 10 th CE)	91-119
V	State Society and Political Unification (11 th to 13 th CE)	120-214
VI	Complexity and Social Tension (14 th to 16 th CE)	215-282
	Simple to Complex: A Summary	283-294
	Bibliography	295-309

List of Tables

Sl.No.	Title	Page No.
1	Chronological Order of Donations	134
2	Nature of donations and their Spatial Distribution	135
3	Land transaction and ownership of land	140
4	References to Tax Terminology and their Spatial Distribution	148
5	References to Brahmadeya and Saturvedimangalam	168
6	References to Titles and Status	170
7	References to Caste Representatives in Social Documents	249

List of Charts

Sl.No.	Title	Page No.
1	References in Tamil Classical Texts	84
2	Herostones (6 th to 10 th CE)	113
3	Inscriptions (11 th to 13 th CE)	186
4	Social Documents (14 th to 16 th CE)	269

Abbreviation

ARIE	Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy
ISN	Inscriptions of Salem and Namakkal
SDK	Social Documents of Kongu
SII	South Indian Inscriptions
TNAD	Tamil Nadu Archaeological Department

Preliminaries:

In Lieu of an Introduction

Research on regional history is increasingly being recognized as an advancement over previously popular dynastic histories because it leads us to a profound and scientific understanding of those hitherto ignored micro aspects that essentially contribute to the birth and evolution of a culture and society. The student of regional history is often confronted by the wide availability of terms and tools of investigation which are neither uniform nor applicable in every period and time. This research on *State, Society and Economy: Evolutionary Study of the Kongu Region (Western Tamil Nadu) From the 6th Century to the 16th Century*¹ finds the term 'evolution' as it aptly captures the nature and intent of this study.

Historians are averse to using the term 'evolution'. Instead, they prefer 'development', 'process', 'formation', 'transition', and the like. It is probably due to the biological connotation, in the Darwinian sense, that the term, evolution, has not found favour with historians. There is also an impression that 'evolution' is more applicable to describe a rigid 'unilinear' development rather than a complex set of growths. Even in the anthropological and ethnological discourses, from where the word has been derived and applied to the social sciences, it was considered as a 'dead concept' and no longer relevant to these disciplines. However, after a period of struggle, 'evolution' was able to regain its academic significance. It remains vital even now and is a subject of debate.

The precise use of the word in this study is perhaps synonymous with the term 'process'. With this term, two aspects are to be studied, 1) the *evolution* of a political mechanism called 'state' and 2) the *evolution* of a class of rural peasantry and their complex social institutions. Rather than undertake a structural analysis of society and the polity in certain stage of the historical process, it would be more fruitful to study the entire course that grounded for a particular development in a particular phase. Such an inquiry in the context of a peripheral region becomes necessary since it addresses some major theoretical problems in Indian historical writings.

¹ In the officially confirmed title, the word 'evolution' has been used instead of 'evolutionary'. It was due to a minor typographical error at the time of confirmation of the research.

The problem

Perceptions with regard to the nature of early Indian society and polity are of two kinds. The first conceptualizes Indian society, the rural communities in particular, as being 'static', 'immobile' and 'despotic' or 'segmented' political units. The second visualizes societal developments as a series of structural changes, but the developments again lead to a stage with the traits of 'immobility', 'self-sufficient village community', 'decline of trade and urban centers' and 'a fragmented polity'. Despite their validity and theoretical merit, the problem in these discourses is perceptibly the sweeping generalization and the lack of a comprehensive empirical knowledge about the structure of rural communities in a different regional context. Though, the so-called 'subject peasantry' is a base for the formulation of these theoretical models, the internal structure and stratification within the peasantry have not adequately been looked into. The peasantry has been treated as immobile or somewhat 'homogeneous' in nature. While most of these studies proclaimed that their presence in history writing marks a new era and the end of a tradition of chronology oriented dynastic histories, the deviation was only seen in terms of a shift from political history to socio-economic history. That is to say, the conquests, and other political achievements of rulers, were replaced with the socio-economic and cultural institutions of the same in the new studies. The people at the 'bottom', and their institutions, were analyzed from the perspective of those 'above' i.e., the social history of the rulers. Or perhaps the kind of source materials available to the scholars did not enable them to move deep into the lower strata of society and study its specific structure. Now, in the absence of records, the lower stratum is generally seen as 'stagnant' or 'immobile'. This not only limits our understanding of the social structure, but also the internal social stratification and the hierarchy of power and the status groups that emerge from within.

Similar cases can also be seen in the context of space. The socio-political process of peripheral micro regions has been given inadequate attention while theorizing the social process. In addition to ignoring the nature of local processes in such peripheral regions from the mainstream discourses, these regions have been used to strengthen various theoretical models constructed mainly from the perspective of core regions. For instance, the political integration in the peripheral region can be perceived as fragmentation in the political unification of the nuclear regions. In such cases, a region can be variously interpreted as a unitary part, fragmented unit, and independent segment.

‘Exclusion’ is also quite possible when historians adhere to one particular theoretical model. For instance, the political process and structure of the polity are moved into the periphery when we analyze society using concepts such as a mode of production and social relations of production. The emergence of the political elite, particularly from among the peasantry, and their continuous struggle to retain their position, the prolonged rivalry among various caste groups, aspiring for social mobility, and various mechanisms adopted by the local rulers to legitimize their power are brought into a narrow space.

Generally, in spatial context, the focus of historical narration shifts from one place to other, based again on the availability of source material. Certain space that hitherto was central in the narration may suddenly lose its position with response to the absence of records (historical). Therefore, regions yielding rich sources always remained the breeding ground of history. The convergence of researchers to make use of such sources has certainly brought better historical understanding of such new areas. But it results in abrupt ending of certain other historical processes, developed from certain sub-regions. In brief, the presence of both ‘people’ and ‘space’ in history is understandably based on the mercy of historians as these can be included or excluded from the narration on the basis of his/her theoretical base or selection of evidences.

Hypothesis and Objectives

In this study, we begin with an assumption that if peripheral regions and the institutional structure of rural peasantry were brought in the center of historical analysis, it would address various problems implicit in generalizing the societal process and historical development in ancient and medieval India. Similarly, we assume that the process of state formation in forest and mountainous uplands may vary from that of the plains in terms of its nature and timeframe. Therefore, most of the theories with regard to socio-economic and political formation, based on certain plains regions, may not be applicable to such highland peripheral zones. Finally, we also suppose that there would have been a great deal of variation in the nature of caste based social hierarchy between the plains and the uplands. Particularly, the brahminical institutions and their social influence would have the least impact in the highlands.

Altogether, we set out three objectives: 1) To bring an isolated or peripheral region to the centre of historical analysis and using an interdisciplinary approach in order to study the gradual upcoming of state society and complex institutions of peasantry. 2) In order to demarcate various stages in such process, to point out certain major characters that marked each phase and discuss various internal and external factors that contributed to the shift from one stage to other. 3) To analyse the nature of migration, rural settlements and the degree of social stratification in different historical stages.

The Region

We have taken up the Kongu region as a case study to explicate these objectives. Generally, a region can be characterized based on its homogeneous geographical setting and cultural features. Though the region does not exactly fit, in the present context, into any geographical category such as river valley, hill region, forest zones, etc., if one considers its dominant physical features, it can be called as a semi-arid area with a major portion occupied by hills and forest. Covering five modern districts of Tamil Nadu viz., Coimbatore, Namakkal, Erode, Salem and Dharmapuri, and some parts of Karur and Dindigul districts, it shares its western and northern boundaries with the modern states of Kerala and Karnataka, respectively. In addition to the physical environment, there are also social, political, and cultural elements, which differentiate the region from other regions of Tamil country. First of all, the process of socio-economic and political formation of this region is considerably different from the rest of Tamilakam in terms of chronological marker and nature. Second, there was no powerful regional dynasty that emerged in south India with this region as its centre. Rather, it was ruled by numerous pastoral chiefs till the beginning of the medieval period. Third, with the end of the Tamil classical period, there was a significant change in the socio-economic and political formation of Tamilakam and thereafter one could find the emergence of a full-fledged state society and polity. But it was not in the case of the region considered here. Till the 9th century CE, the region displayed a sort of semi-tribal socio-political formation in which the practices of cattle raiding, intertribal warfare, hero worship and erecting the *nadukarkal* were prominent. And finally, the spread of agrarian institutions, and consequently the emergence of a full-fledged state society took place only during the 10th century and later. These distinct features clearly manifest its regional identity.

Methodology and Sources

The study follows a simple anthropological evolutionary approach i.e., simple to complex. It has been framed as development of a series of successive stages beginning with a simple semi-tribal society of megalithic period to complex caste society of the medieval times. In each historical stage, the degree of social stratification, peasantry, migration, aspects of village settlement and emerging power hierarchy from peasantry, persistent tension among various social groups, etc., are being examined. The discussion in each stage relies primarily upon a particular category of historical documents. In fact, these documents themselves have naturally been arranged in an evolutionary manner. Thus, classical Tamil literature, herostones, where the hero's figure is carved and his exploits inscribed on the stone, stone inscriptions and social documents—each signifies a specific socio-economic and political development in the evolutionary process. Though, the discussion is determined with response to the availability of sources, importance is being given to the 'mobility' from below. Especially, in the analysis about the nature of peasantry and caste stratification, the documents preserved by the vast majority of peasants and other service groups have been predominantly used. It is precisely because a clear picture of peasantry and its institution emerges only when it is studied by drawing reference from its own documents.

As stated, the chapters that deal with a specific stage in the evolutionary process use a particular category of sources. To study *Early Settlers and Emergence of Chieftoms* in the third chapter, the references found in Tamil classical literature have been predominantly used. The chart (Chart-1) at the end of this chapter shows the list of the selected songs, the name of texts, subject matters, etc. The songs have been singled out: 1) on the basis of the region or locality that the poems speak of (ex. *kudirai malai*, *kolli malai*, etc), 2) the songs that refer the chiefs of Kongu region (ex. Ori, Adiyaman, etc), and 3) based on the references related to the social groups that are specific to the region (*kongar*, *kosar*, *kurumbar*, etc). Seventy hero-stone inscriptions belonging to the 6th to 10th century CE are the primary sources used in the fourth chapter on *Towards the State: Stratification and Sedenterization*. The continuation of heroic tradition and the gradual stratification in the existing agro-pastoral society is discussed by examining these hero stones. Chart-II of this chapter gives the list of these hero stones. The contents, date, subject, portrayal, etc., are given in separate columns. The discussion in

the fifth chapter, *The State Society and Political Unification*, precisely relied upon the information collected from 545 stone inscriptions. All these inscriptions belong to the period between 10th and 13th century CE. The references with regard to ruler, date, communities, nature of land, nature of land donation, irrigation, nature of donation, nature of donor, administration, titles found with personal names are given elaborately in chart –IV. The chart enables us to make statistical analysis wherever it is necessary. Finally, 50 social documents in the form of copper plates and palm leaves are listed in chart-V, which forms the basis of chapter Six. The aspects of village settlements, migration, peasantry and their institutions, caste relations and hierarchy, etc are studied using these social documents preserved by peasant communities and others. The narration in the social documents deals particularly with the history of the period between the 14th and the 16th century CE.

Limitation of the Study

A word of caution about the various limitations of the study is necessary. First of all, demarcation of the ancient physical boundaries of the region poses problems. There is no definite mapping with exact territorial limits of the region. Similarly, the limits of the region vary time and again, based on the mobilizing power and capacity of contemporary rulers. For example, Adiyaman, a chief during the classical period ruled from modern Dharmapuri region, is considered to be a ruler of Kongu. But for the medieval period, Dharmapuri is not considered as part of Kongu. Similarly, a few *taluks* (blocks) of Karur and Madurai are said to be bordering areas of the Kongu region. But in these places, the influences of Chola and the Pandiya, the rulers from the plains regions, are higher than the local Kongu chiefs. For our analysis upto the 10th century, we have included these regions while they have been excluded in the chapters that deal with the medieval Kongu i.e., 11th to 16th CE. Second, in the chapter four, our analysis is based on hero stones. Though these hero stones have been found scattered throughout the region, most of them belong to northeastern part of Kongu. Therefore, we have to generalize these hero stone references to pertain to the whole of Kongu. Third, in chapter five, the inscriptional analyses have been done after thoroughly examining the text of published inscriptions. But the text of the inscriptions that belonged to the Dindigal taluk of Dindigul district has not been published. Since the brief note about these inscriptions given in the Annual Reports is not enough and it is not possible to put

them in the inscriptions chart, which follows different methodology based on full text of the inscriptions, they have not been included in the analysis. Finally, the dates of the social documents used in the sixth chapter are irregular. They can, in a sense, be considered as *puranas*, or oral record, of village communities since most of them give a detailed history of caste groups connecting them with some mythical personalities. However, these documents have been used here to study the social developments from the 14th to 16th century. These documents have generally been selected on the basis of the details they have on contemporary rulers (like the Chola, Pandiya, Vijayanagara, Nayakka, etc.) described in them. A comparative analysis of the language and phrases used in the social documents with that of contemporary inscriptions also have helped us to identify their historical relevance to the period under review.

Chapters

Chapter-I: A Review of Evolutionary Studies: The first section of the chapter introduces two essential concepts, ‘state formation’ and evolution of the peasantry and the caste based social hierarchy. Relevant anthropological literature have been reviewed here. The second and final sections undertake a synoptic survey of the major arguments about the socio-political formation in India and more specifically in south Indian during the early and the medieval periods. More than extending a theoretical foreground, the chapter enables us to situate the study in its historiographical context.

Chapter-II: Mapping the Region: Physical and Cultural Geography: It analyses the physical and cultural geography of the region.

Chapter-III: Early Settlers and Emergence of Chiefdoms (upto 5th CE): The chapter discusses the nature of socio-economic and political formation during the early historic period. The major traits such as hunting-herding social relations, gradual evolution of chiefdoms, the role of Kongu chieftains and their relation with other chiefs, trade and exchanges and all other relevant issues are discussed.

The prehistory, based on archaeological excavations, is followed by the early history, based specifically on the textual and epigraphic sources. The period of Tamil classical literature in south India also includes the latter part of megalithic culture. Therefore, a correlative analysis of these two cultures helps us to chracterize the contemporary socio-political pattern. The diffusion of Iron and Black, and Red Ware technology can probably be understood with various human settlements in Kongu.

Vedar, *irular*, *kurumbar*, *eyinar*, *maravar*, *kosar*, and *kongar*, to which we find numerous literary references, were different social groups associated with early Kongu. Among them, the *vedar* (hunters), *irular* (dark-skinned hunters), *eyinar* (another hunter group) and *kurumbar* (cattle-grazer) are categorized as early migrants. These nomadic tribes gradually settled in different parts of Kongu, though mostly in forest and mountain areas. In course of time, they began to control certain areas and it led to the foundation of several chiefdoms within the region. The political formation was largely based on strong kinship ties. The clan-based leadership was required to have the ability to lead the kinsmen at the time of hunting and plundering. At times, the warlike nature of Kongu chiefs attracted the neighbouring rulers who often sought their help to strengthen their army. These chieftains emerged from various parts of Kongu and were frequently engaged in war with one another. Gift making was one of the significant factors that defined the status of the chiefs. The social stratification, based on occupation, was not clearly defined; the differentiation generally was only between chiefs and other kinsmen. The megalithic burial findings also indicate the warlike activities of these hunter-cum-pastoral social groups. Presumably, the resources mobilized through hunting, plunder, and trade on natural products were controlled and redistributed by these chiefs.

Chapter-IV: Towards the State: Stratification and Sedenterization (6th to 10th CE):

The chapter deals with another concurrent phase that emerged out of hunting and herding socio-economic formation. The firm rootedness of society in an agro-pastoral subsistence economy and the contemporary societal practices such as cattle raiding, cattle recovering, hero-worship, inter-tribal warfare, etc., have been taken into detailed analysis. The entire discussion in this chapter is based upon the references found in seventy hero stones.

While the plains of south India witnessed the collapse of the early classical chiefdoms leading to state formation, their socio-political and economic developments were not reflected in Kongu. Despite this divergent transformation, the society did not remain static. But the developments were not enough to have the components of agrarian dominated state society. In a sense, the new developments can be distinguished in terms of complex chiefdoms with different operational levels and segmented lineage groups. All we can ascertain from the hero stones, a contemporary tradition to preserve

historical memory, is a well-rooted pastoral society, village settlements, clan segments, and local lineage formation. The early social groups like *kurumbar*, *eynars*, *vettuvass*, *kuravars*, *vedar*, *malavars*, etc., discussed in the previous stage still continued their traditional way of life, adopted divergent modes of subsistence and, in course of time, divided into several sub-groups, however, not losing their larger tribal affinity. They shared certain common indigenous identities, though they were internally divided based on clan, kinship and, of course, occupation. Among these early tribes the *vettuvass*, with a sizeable population, emerged as the most powerful and most probably all other marginalized tribes became sub-units to the *vettuva* tribe. By the time, the *vettuvass* themselves divided into several segmented clans and occupational groups. Each group maintained its own local lineage attaching itself to one common ancestor or connecting the group to a powerful chief or king. Though agriculture was practised from the early period, it did not dominate the socio-economic relations of the indigenous people. Towards the 9th century CE a section of the *vettuva* tribe would have taken up cultivation. The *vellalas*, who are believed to have introduced irrigated-agriculture in Kongu, were immigrants from various plains regions of south India. Thus the structural differentiation in society was further complicated during the 10th century CE when there were immigration from different parts of south India. In the religious sphere, the existing mode of production was not favourable to the establishment or the spread of brahminism. The hold of brahminism, which gave a powerful ideological support to political unification of the region, became consolidated only during the next stage when there developed strong productive forces and a compatible social relation of production as a result of considerable expansion in agrarian settlements.

Chapter-V: State Society and Political Unification (11th to 13th CE): The chapter examines the contents of 545 stone inscriptions belonging to the period between the 11th and 13th century. The discussion on the nature of political unification and the structure of state society has been done under five headings. They are 1) Origin of village communities: the primary producers and their relations, 2) Production and the surplus: the regional variation, 3) Political unification and ideological legitimization, 4) The power structure: Institutions of exploitation, 5) Characterizing the state: Theoretical models and their applicability, and 6) The complexity ahead.

During this phase, there is a visible change in the basic structure of the society that hitherto rested upon an agro-pastoral subsistence economy. The ideology of heroism

gradually crumbled giving way to the dominance of brahminism. Tribes began to take up new role in the changed scenario; some became full-time agriculturalist while others adhered to their traditional occupation. As a result, it led to a social hierarchy based mainly on their role in the production along with their overall status in society from the perspective of brahminism. Brahminical ideology began to penetrate the local society, particularly the local elite, aspiring for power. From the political point of view, the segmented chiefs were centralized by both ideological and political means. The models of state developed in the Pandiya and Chola regions were adopted and for the first time, an independent state, incorporating all parts of the region, emerged under the political control of an independent chieftain family called, *konattan*. At the local level, there emerged a composite ruling group comprising members of *nadu*, *nagaram* and other state representatives or officials. *Nadu* became basic territorial unit and chiefs of these *nadus* were big landholders, who sometimes acted as representatives of both the state and the *nadu*. Specialized administrative mechanism was employed mainly through the institution of the temple.

At the end of the chapter, it is argued that the process of state formation in Kongu did not come fully into any of the conceptual paradigms such as unitary state, segmentary state, south Indian feudalism, etc. It is suggested the state formation in Kongu should be studied from the perspective of how the state developed within the regional context and what are the internal and external factors that contributed to such development. Similarly, the political process and the emergence of state need to be studied with the necessary changes in the contemporary socio-economic formation. Considering this, it has been noticed that the socio-economic condition of Kongu during the period of the Pallava and the beginning of the Cholas' rule was more of an agro-pastoral society and economy. At this juncture, characterizing them as part or segment of the above said states cannot be acceptable. Therefore, the study concludes that state formation in Kongu can be characterized as one where 'local state formation' was emerging within the overall regional set-up. It was neither a changeless society nor was it part of a full unitary set-up. It was definitely not a part of a decentralized state and though it had some features of a segmentary state in terms of its ecological peculiarity, it actually exemplifies the various dimensions of local state formation as a result of both internal and external influence.

Chapter-VI: Complexity and Social Tension (14th to 16th CE): Various anthropological approaches on caste and caste hierarchy discussed in the first chapter provides theoretical foreground to the discussion in this chapter. The chapter specifically focuses upon the emergence of land-based communities and their relation with the other occupational groups. It has been discussed in seven sections, viz., 1) the scenario of caste formation, 2) aspects of migration, land transfer and pattern of village settlements, 3) caste, myths and mobilization, 4) inter caste relations and hierarchy, 5) caste and power titles, 6) clan system and internal stratification and 7) complexity and tension.

Kongu regions continued to be a place for migration. Divergent social groups began to settle from various parts of south India. There were also several cases of internal migrations within the region. The *kongu vellalar* were able to evolve as a dominant landholding community and a section of new local rulers also had emerged out of the community. The use of the term *koundar* by all kinsmen of both *Kongu vellalar* and *vettuvār* peasants show the overall mobility of the peasants within the regional context. As *koundar* became a caste name, the titles such as *manradiyar*, *pattakarar*, *pallavarayar*, *kalingarayar*, etc., signified the socio-economic and political power of its holders. There were land transactions in a large number of these; the transition of land rights from *vettuvār* to *Kongu vellalar* is more significant. Medieval Kongu witnessed the multiplication of number of castes groups. There were competition and negotiation among the castes in order to secure power and privileges. As a result, it propelled persistence of tension and rivalry among them. By the end of the sixteenth century, the rank and position of the almost all castes in the social hierarchy was fixed. Their emulation was forbidden, even then, it was constantly challenged. Despite the diffusion of brahminical ideology deep into the lowest stratum of the society, within this land based caste structure, the brahmin exercised less control or power than the land owning non-brahmin castes. Therefore, in addition to the socio-economic advantages, the numerical strength of a particular caste is also a causative factor that determined the caste hierarchy. Acquiring the rights over the local temples was considered essential for the dominant landowning castes. It symbolized their power within the locality. All major castes began to construct their own mythological history tracing their origin with godly figures in the brahminical texts. There were also internal divisions within a caste. The *kootam* stratification of the *vellalar* and *vettuvār* community requires a detailed

anthropological study. Finally, the picture of village communities and their traditions and beliefs that emerge from the social documents contradict the inscription-based studies. In fact, the reading of social documents provides an alternative approach to study the birth of peasantry and the nature of village communities during the medieval times.

Chapter-VII: Simple to Complex-A Summary: It is a brief concluding chapter summarizing the general trend of arguments, methodology used in this, and the surmises drawn from them.

The dissertation has attempted to go beyond given models based on the study of well-studied regions like the Kaveri basin to indicate the different trajectories that historical evolutions can take.

Chapter-I

A Review of Evolutionary Studies

Any study of a long-term history of a particular region must begin with a detailed exposition of the relevant historical and anthropological literature which invariably serves as a background. Such an exposition will provide us a perspective on ways of approaching the problem taken up for research. An attempt is made here to survey the historical, anthropological, and historiographical literature related to the problem taken up for research. The first section of the chapter attempts to introduce the fundamental themes and concepts such as state formation, state institution, social stratification, division and diversification of labour, caste, hierarchy and social mobility. The second and final section attempt to grapple with historiographical approaches, to the themes and concepts we introduced, in the context of the early history of south India. We shall deal with the variously scholarly works on societal changes, political formation, structure of state, nature of peasantry and village communities in India.

1. Evolution of State and Society

The notion of 'State Society' is referred to mean a range of complex ideas. With the effort to experiment his biological understanding to study the growth and differentiation of human institutions, Darwin turned the academic community to read the societal and cultural institutions from the perspective of 'process'. In fact, the idea of social process or social evolution was not new at that time. A few decades before Darwin, Herbert Spencer also proposed more or less the same theory in his seminal work *System of Synthetic Philosophy*, however it remained unnoticed for quite long period until Darwin's systematic work *Origin of Species*, which was somewhat able to kindle the existing intellectual thinking towards this line.¹ In addition to this, there were also, questions arose against the biblical way of looking the evolution and the institutional developments. It somewhat urged the need for both philosophical and scientific understanding of human evolution. Spencer was the first to believe and put forth the theory that the human institutions evolve according to a specific formula.² He emphasized upon 'differentiation', 'specialization' and 'coordination' in his theory of evolution. However, only Darwin best articulated the notion of 'change'. Though the

¹ Joseph Fracchia and R.C.Lewontin, 'Does Culture Evolve?', *History and Theory*, Vol.38, No.4, Theme Issue 38: The Return of Science: Evolutionary Ideas and History, 1999, pp.52-78. Relevant debate can be seen in the introductory part of Matthew Nitecki and Doris Nitecki (ed), *History and Evolution*, Albany, New York, 1992.

² Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology*, New York and London, 1914, pp.432-433.

application of Darwin's biological evolution theory to study the human institution faced several criticisms during the later period, it undoubtedly provided a base for all later studies in this direction. His famous concept, the 'survival of the fittest' proposed the idea of struggle for existence and its consequent development of human institutions. Everything is in a state of alteration- some develop into development and others develop into decline, some develop upon decline and some decline upon development, all out of the human struggle to attack the problems of existence, creating a circumstantial compulsion which results in a consistent process of change in human institutions. However, in both Spencer and Darwin's system of evolution, the idea of 'state society' was not discussed. Or probably it was not the need of the time, rather what needed was that to demolish and come out from the biblical theme of 'evolution' *i.e.*, all human institutions were god's creation. But the idea of 'change' came out very clearly in their reading. The discussion at this time had not yet developed up to see various social indicators and thus to demarcate various stages in the course of evolution—but it provided a lead for other scholars.

A step further, Morgan went on to trace some general stages in the human evolution. His thesis later contributed to the understanding of changes based on the progress achieved in the means of subsistence. 'The great epochs of human progress have been identified, more or less directly, with the enlargement of these sources of subsistence'—the Morgan's idea later highly influenced some of the 19th century philosophers particularly Marx and Engels. He divided the process into 'savagery', 'barbarism' and 'civilization'. Each stage can be further divided into three stages lower, middle and upper. Here, though, Morgan did not discuss much about the third stage, *i.e.*, civilization, what probably understood, as state society was much closer to his *civilization* stage. After the death of Marx, when Engels revisited notes on *Ancient Society* of Morgan,³ it enabled them to conceptualize the entire course in terms of 'economic determinism'. It was first time when the characters and structure of society that produced the organization of 'state' was convincingly and systematically articulated. The basics notion of state that emerged in the Marxian synthesis sustains still in spite of severe criticism and wider alteration by present scholars. At the peak of the societal stratification, when the social groups divided itself broadly into two classes *viz.*, the producer and non-producers, the state emerged.

3 Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*, Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1965.

In Marxian doctrine, state is an organization of non-producers who have been variously defined as the owners, the exploiters and the oppressors. It is an organization of the organized to protect the interest of privileged groups in society. It serves the interest of rich to safeguard their power and property. In this sense, the state institutionalises and regularizes the channels of exploitation in order to subtract the surplus production. When the class antagonism reaches its peak, the institution of state emerges. The breach in communal ownership on production is the departure point for the emergence of the state. Therefore, before the birth of state, the society was undivided and undifferentiated. In a divided class-society, the state is a set-up that upholds the *status quo* of the two classes so as to avoid the tension and to ensure the continued survival of the dominant one. The class, consisted of non-producers controlling the means of production, retained its political, ideological and economic power and the class of producers separated from the means of production were subordinated and subjected to serve the interest of the former. In the understanding of Marx and Engels, the 'state society' would refer to a condition in which aforesaid classes emerge.

Morton H Fried, one of the few well-known anthropologists of the 20th century, also proposed more or less the same theory in the line of economic determination in the process of social evolution.⁴ His book, *Evolution of Political Society* puts forth four stages of evolution, viz., 1) egalitarian society, 2) rank society, 3) stratified society and 4) state society. The stratified society makes a way for the emergence of state. Unequal access to those resources that sustain the society is the beginning of stratification; it ultimately ends in a sort of centralized form of political organization that can be called the state. Therefore the state, particularly in Marxian line, is an institution to maintain the inequality and to regularize the relations among the socially diversified groups. The system is maintained, if necessary, by cohesive forces.

Service, in his work, *Origin of State and Civilization*⁵ has brought an alternative method that went against the idea of economic determinism in the emergence of social inequality. He argued that it were the personal qualities of the individual that brought him economic and political power. It was not only a process of legitimisation, which involves non-employment of cohesive power but also an ideological legitimization that

4 Morton H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, Random House, New York, 1967.

5 Elman Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective*, Norton, New York, 1962; 'Classical and Modern Theories of the Origins of Government' in R.Cohen and E.R.Service (ed.), *Origins of the State* (ed.), Institute of the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia, 1978, pp.21-34.

invokes the subjects' sentiment for the voluntary acceptance of the power of the leadership. The bifurcation of society into ruling class and working class began at this point. Accepting the role of warfare, population growth and class stratification, Service takes inverse stand and emphasizes that the factors such as warfare, intensification of irrigated agriculture, population growth, urbanism, class stratification and protection of the interests of the privileged groups etc., cannot be seriously considered as causative features for the state origin, although they might have a significant role in the evolution of societies.

In the recent times, the Marxian approach to the study of state was re-emphasized more clearly by Lawrence Krader in his work, *The Origin of the State among the Nomads of Asia*.⁶ Accepting the state as a product of class divided society, Krader is of the opinion that the state emerges in particular social condition. In state society, the classes have mutually opposed relations to the means of production. They emerge when the social production is higher than the consumption of social units. The period prior to the state was more communal, characterized by localized production and consumption. State, in some sense, is an epitome of the formal relations of the individual human being, as it is a formal relation of the society. The pre-state institutions such as kin, clan, village etc., continued to be present even in the class stratified state society with or without alteration in its societal functions. In fact, these primeval institutions functioned more or less like state in a stratified civil society. They contributed to the maintenance of peace, organization of war, settlement of internal conflicts and so forth. When civil society necessitated the coming of state organization, it took over the function of these primitive institutions. However, the point of departure was the diminishing economic dependency of kin and clans groups on these primitive institutions, for there was hardly any compulsion for tributary obligation; they were relatively free from the economic exploitation, a concrete feature of the state society.

Claessen and Skalnik have contributed to a great extent in studying the nature and structure of early state. In their edited work, *The Early State*, they analysed a range of 21 samples of early states across the world, and then formulated a comprehensive definition for the early state which includes more or less the essence of all the previous

⁶ Lawrence Krader, 'The Origin of the State among the Nomads of Asia', in H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik (eds.), *The Early State*, Mouton, The Hague, 1978, pp.93-107.

definitions of state till date.⁷ According to them, the early state is 'a centralized socio-political organization for the regulation of social relations in complex, stratified society divided into at least two basic strata, or emergent social classes- viz., the rulers and the ruled, whose relations are characterized by political dominance of the former and tributary obligations of the latter, legitimised by a common ideology in which reciprocity is the basic principle'.⁸ Indeed, there is not much deviation from the Marxian way of analysing society, though however, the definition tries to accommodate all the previous definitions of the state. Apart from characterizing its process, it tries to comprehend the structure of the state society. The main function of the early state was to regulate the relations between the classes. It seems to be an alternate way to understand the class concept of Marx. The characters of state society that appear clearly in their structural analysis are: 1) centralized government, 2) stratified society 3) class division viz., rulers and ruled, 5) political dominance and subordination 6) tributary obligations, taxes, etc. and 7) ideological legitimisation.

In sum, the state is an outcome of the prolonged structural alteration in society, economy and polity. These approaches to understand the nature and structure of the state must be considered as different kinds of methods to define the state. One may not reject one approach at the expense of another. Each attempt offers the possibility of another way to look at the state. In fact, changes in one institution leads to certain degrees of structural adjustment in another. And there is also wider space for spatial differences—the historical process and societal evolution are subjected to local variation. It is highly evident in the work of Claessen and Skalnik. Among the 21 models of early state, each represents a distinct historical process. Probably, this is what that confused the scholars to look for a universally applicable definition of state. Despite the enormity of variations, there are certain characteristic features that are found invariably in all early states across the world. First of all, state society is understandably a stratified society in which the two broader divisions of ruler and ruled, or ruler and producer are quite explicit—the relationship between these two may be either benevolent or antagonistic.⁹ These two divisions further got internally stratified into several subdivisions, and they ultimately became the basic structure of the society. Secondly, in state society one can observe that surplus in social production has been achieved whatever may be the modes,

7 Claessen, H.J.M. and Skalnik, P. (eds), *The Early State*, op.cit., p. 21.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

and when surplus increases the societal stratification also develops. Thirdly, different channels to extract the surplus are institutionalised. For this purpose, the existing institutions of pre-state society are generally subordinated either by the means of ideological legitimisation or by deploying cohesive forces. In several cases, the considerable surplus in production was only possible when the society transformed into an agrarian production. Fourthly, territorial divisions and standing army are not essential features of early state, however, there are higher possibilities for their presence. The territorial divisions of pre-state society were recognized and regularized in the state in the same way, as were those of the pre-state institutions. Territorial boundaries at larger level were fluctuating depending upon the leadership. After certain point, probably after the process of ideological legitimisation had been completed, the use of permanent cohesive forces was not much required. However, there were possibilities for minimum level of cohesiveness, some kind of coercive authority to tackle the internal dangers to the state. At the time of external threats or war, generally the forces were mobilized from the local communities. And finally, tributary obligations was no longer voluntary, it became compulsive in terms of various taxes; effective taxation system was deployed which was a backbone for the functioning of the state. Therefore, when people in a society developed a collective consciousness to accept or to create new institutions, the particular society can be defined as state society.

2. Evolution of Caste system and Social Hierarchy

Literatures of castes are numerous and it is not possible to review every single work here. The caste system, considered somewhat specific to Indian societies, arises out of an intense social stratification. As stated, the social separation always exists in its different forms like kin, clan, and occupations. However, the grouping of ethnic individuals in terms of caste can be distinguished in many ways from the other. In non-caste societies, the membership of particular stratum is not based on hereditary and the major controlling positions are open to individuals from any strata of social structure, at least at the theoretical level. Here, the major controlling positions were allocated to people of upper strata while the routine and non-control positions were reserved for

people in the lower strata.¹⁰ The absence of any ethnic heterogeneity resulted in internal differentiation of society leading to the multiplication of castes.

In view of Karve, the caste complexity is due to the 'repeated fragmentation of previously unitary social groupings'.¹¹ 'Some castes have long history as castes, others are immigrant groups and some are recognized to have emerged as castes from the tribal status'.¹² The complex structure of caste is due to both internal fragmentation and incorporation of tribal communities.¹³ To Peries, 'the dominant caste is originally a powerful invading group, and once established as the governing caste, relegates all future immigrant groups to the ranks of the aboriginal inferior castes'.¹⁴ The assimilation of several tribal and ethnic units into single social system created a necessity, particularly for the powerful social groups, to regulate them as hierarchical categories by delineating their social role. If a new group is incorporated into the caste system, its rank, role, privileges and power are fixed in consideration of its social role. Though they are interdependent in their social functioning, each caste is independent within a given space.

The caste system is very flexible in a sense that any non-caste group can easily be incorporated into the system. However, after entering into the system and placing itself into certain position and rank, it becomes very rigid. Both emulation and social mobility of castes are restricted, though it was always challenged. Therefore, it is a mechanism of both coordination and separation, with the aim to control the power and privilege.¹⁵ Separation of different caste groups is as much important as its inclusion to safeguard the privileges of certain castes. Behavioral rules, interaction mechanism and the context in which they can be used are clearly defined and strictly followed.¹⁶ Thereby each caste is distinct from others in their cultural, social, and occupational practices. And in fact, this is what determines their position in the system. Tension arises

10 B.Moore Jr., 'The Relation Between Social Stratification and Social Control', *Sociometry*, Vol.5, No.3, August, 1942, pp.230-250.

11 Irawati Karve, *Hindu Society: An Interpretation*, Deccan College of Postgraduate and Research Institute, Poona, 1961.

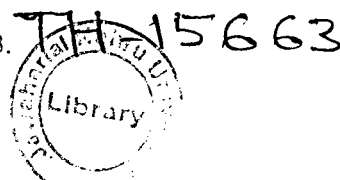
12 Ibid, p.12ff. Also see, Gerald D. Berreman, 'Caste as Social Process', *South Western Journal of Anthropology*, vol.22, no.4, 1967, p.351.

13 Suvira Jaiswal, 'Varna Ideology and Social Change', *Social Scientist*, vol.19, no.314, 1991, pp.41-48.

14 Ralph Pieris, 'Caste, Ethos, and Social Equilibrium', *Social Forces*, vol.30, no.4, 1952, p.414.

15 Gerald D. Berreman, 'Stratification, Pluralism and Interaction: A Comparative Analysis of Caste', De Reuck and J. Knight (eds.), *Caste and Race Comparative Approaches*, Brown and Co, Boston, no.6, 1952, pp.45-73. Burton Benedict, 'Stratification in Plural Society', *American Anthropologist*, vol.64, pp.1235-1246.

16 Gerald D. Berreman, 'Caste as Social Process', op.cit., p.363.



when some castes try to challenge the existing taboos. Similarly, there would always be a contention between the two or more immediate castes in the ranking for superior position. An economically powerful caste can be promoted to a higher position in case of its behavioral and cultural changes, generally by imitating those in the top, and when its service becomes vital for the functioning of society.

In this sense, 'caste is self promoting and self regulatory'.¹⁷ Being a self-regulatory, caste as a collective body is responsible for the behaviour of its members and their material and social advancement. Any sanctions that affect any member of the caste will be extended to other members and shared by the caste as a whole. Similarly, the misbehaviour of a member that goes against the caste virtues will not be desirable, rather it deserves a regulatory and preventive action. In this context, 'the caste is an effective kind of organization and functioning like a guild or union'.¹⁸ Interactions, even within the close allies, are restricted and not allowed beyond certain prescribed norms and limits. The castes, which have relatively an equal economic and social status are always involved in adverse competition and prefer to share, identify their interests only with those in the top of caste hierarchy. However, castes can come together and form a confederation for the pursuit of their common interest, while consciously maintaining their social and cultural distance.¹⁹

In caste based social system, the hierarchy of castes is also hierarchy of power. Power is connected with the cultural distinction, religious position and other socio-economic factors. 'Caste organization not only protects the power; it is also dependent on power'.²⁰ Privileges and rights are allocated to the castes ascribing to power. The dominant castes can uphold its authority as long as there was no upward mobility among the lower castes. In general, two options were left to the tribal groups i.e., 'the emulation and solidarity conflict', as observed by Orans.²¹ A tribal group can emulate the dominant culture and become part of system. On the other hand, tribal group can challenge the caste system as a whole, maintaining its distinct identity with organized group cohesion. However, in both cases the groups were treated with low status by the dominant culture.

17 G.D. Berreman, 'Caste as Social Process', op.cit., p.357.

18 G.D Berreman, 'Caste as Social Process', op.cit., p.358

19 The division of society into idangai and valangai in south India can be cited as suitable example in this regard.

20 Gerald D Berreman, 'Caste as Social Process', op.cit., p.p.356-57.

21 Martin Orans, 'A Tribe in Search of a Great Tradition: The Emulation-Solidarity Conflict', *Man in India*, vol. 39, 1959, pp. 108-144

In case of emulation, it is encouraged up to an extent by placing the new group in certain rank in the caste hierarchy.

There is another interesting aspect in the caste hierarchy. Caste mobility can be initiated and achieved within the system. It could be possible not simply by emulation of dominant culture, but rather the caste in the upward mobility should also generate enough social and economic power. There are two means by which a caste can acquire power and privilege. First 'by emulation of high status groups, i.e., validating a claim to privileges through display of suitable attributes' and secondly 'by organized power, i.e., validating a claim to privilege through exercise of political, economic and physical or other power'.²² Therefore, despite the rigid restrictions and constraints, the caste hierarchy is always challenged, altered and redefined.

M.N. Srinivas provides the cultural aspect of emulation in terms of 'sanskritization'. He writes,

'the caste system is far from a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the custom, rites and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the Brahmanic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent though theoretically forbidden.'²³

The advancement of a lower caste to a higher rank is not desired by other castes. It generally leads to a structural alteration in the system provoking conflicts and social tension. The dominant castes can pursue their power and privileges as long as it is not challenged by the lower castes. If the upliftment of a caste in the hierarchy were unavoidable, there would be structural adjustment in power sharing among the higher castes. With an aspiration to status and power, like upper castes that have already developed a glorifying history of its ancestry, the other castes also try to construct their genealogical history linking with some mythological personalities.²⁴ In the emerging new scenario, reconstructing the caste history, often deviating from previous definition imposed by dominant caste, is important to legitimize their power. The newly invented

22 Gerald D. Berreman, 'Caste as Social Process', op.cit., p.359.

23 M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1952, p.30.

24 For instance, in case of south India, most of the castes in the middle order of social hierarchy began to construct their own mythological history during the medieval period.

myths and genealogical history provide a new hereditary linkage with ancient mythological heroes of mainly *kshatriya* status as described in the brahminical texts. Thus, it justifies the claim of the castes for newly acquired rank and position. The aspects of caste mobility, conflicting caste interests and contentions with aspirations to power are persistent phenomena throughout the ancient and medieval Indian history.

Transition from a lower rank to higher rank can be utilized to acquire either ritual status or political status by exercising socioeconomic dominance. The ritual identity and political identity are in close interplay; still it can be distinguished from each other.²⁵ In Aberle's words, 'neither in the present nor the past can the ritual ranking of castes be understood without reference to the political and economic system in which they have embedded'.²⁶ Particularly, the ritual identity holds less value where the ancient *varna* system was adopted not in strict sense but in its modified forms.²⁷ Similar caste titles adopted by various caste groups during the medieval period indicate its political power than the ritual status.²⁸

Caste system has also been studied by drawing a comparison with the nature of social classification in traditional societies. In traditional societies, there can be 'no exchange without classifications to distinguish the exchanging groups and to provide the principle of their interdependency'.²⁹ Castes as a classification based on occupation of social groups evolve into a system of interdependency in order to regulate the relations of exchange. Instead of being merely a means of subsistence, occupation of a particular caste group is rather carried out for the benefit of other castes. Caste system regularizes the relations of exchange (of goods and services) among the different occupation (caste) groups. Given this, the interdependency of caste groups can be sustained.

The widely debated Dumont theory stems from the above understanding on the interconnection between classification of social institutions and relations of exchange

25 J. Pandian, 'Political Emblems of Caste Identity: An Interpretation of Tamil Caste Titles', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol.56, no.4, 1983, p.190.

26 Kathleen G.Aberle, 'Criteria of Caste Ranking in South India', *Man in India*, vol.39, 1959, p.125.

27 Suvira Jaiswal, 'Caste Ideology and Context', *Social Scientist*, vol.25, no.5/6, 1997, p.7.

28 However, various anthropological studies on modern caste hierarchy and ranking point out various determining factors placing castes in particular rank. For example, numerical strength, economic and political power, western education, occupation along with ritual status and *varna* hierarchy situate a caste in particular rank. See, M.N.Srinivas, 'Varna and Caste' in Dipankar Gupta (ed.), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991, p.29. Gerald Berreman, 'Brahmanical View of Caste' in Dipankar Gupta (ed.), *Social Stratification*, op.cit., p.86.

29 Bryan Pfaffenberger, 'Social Communication in Dravidian Ritual', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, vol.36, no. 2. 1980, p.199.

developed by Levi Strauss. In Dumont's theory, the religious binary of pure and impure is the basis for the classification of the total system. Accepting caste as an occupational category, Dumont presumes that the occupations at once secular and religious, each caste had a religious role to play. Once occupation being secular and religious, it determined the principle of caste interdependency. Therefore, the caste hierarchy is primarily a system of linear order based on social separation of the pure and the impure. It is not necessarily exploitative in nature, whereas it is a rational system to ensure subsistence of everyone in accordance with his social function.

The idea of pure-impure based caste hierarchy has been severely criticized on several grounds. Dumont's rejection of power and economic and political factors, and their interplay with ritual status in structuring caste separation has been highlighted by the critiques of *Homo Hierarchicus*. Status and power can go together and they are 'inseparable'.³⁰ Gerald D. Berreman writes,

'Corporate rank is intrinsic to the caste system. It is made up of many components, sacred and secular, which vary by region, by historical circumstances, and by the social, economic and political characteristics of these being considered. Ranking also varies by the social position of those making the judgment relative to those judged, and by the circumstances in which the ranking is applied: claimed rank is not the same as accorded rank. Untouchables define the rank of other groups in their category differently than do Brahmins. For example, ranking which is manifest at a ritual feast may be quite different from rank manifest in the bazaar. Such is the complexity of caste and rank in Indian and it is scarcely reducible to the purity/pollution opposition.'³¹

3. Indian Historical Writings and the Evolution of State and Society

Nearly two centuries of Indian historical writings have witnessed several unusual ideological twists and turns. As historians gradually began to shift their focus from core regions to peripheries, from the rulers to the people, a series of new set of ideological discourses began to develop. 'Evolution' and 'process' are sort of inappropriate phrases to study the Indian society according to early European writings on India. The limited sources materials and lack of indigenous knowledge enabled them to give an erroneous impression that other than kingship no political institutions existed in ancient India.³² Nevertheless, there were two useful outcomes from these early European writings. First,

30 Gerald D. Berreman, *Social Stratification*, op.cit., pp.16-25.

31 Ibid, p.87.

32 For examples, James Mill asserted that Indian society had remained substantially unchanged since its inception, see, *History of British India*, 3 vols, London, 1817.

it helped for the formulation of two important theories, Asiatic Mode of Production and the Oriental Despotism,³³ and secondly it provoked the entire lot of Indian scholars to take up the job of writing history on their own.

The new intellectual emphasis upon the theory that the material conditions were causal factors for historical process provoked some fruitful historical dialogue in the 19th century Europe. As a result, describing history as series of structural changes determined by changes in the existing method of production became a dominant trend. However, the Indian development in this regard was not upto the extent. The writings during the colonial period provided insufficient knowledge that was incompatible to the 'mode of production' trend in Europe. It is in this context that the idea of changelessness in Indian social formation began to gain support and became essence for the 'Asiatic Mode of Production' theory. The communal ownership of land, self-sufficient village economy, complete absence of private property and a series of despotic rule (Oriental Despotism) characterized the Indian situation until the establishment of British rule. Therefore, the 'evolution' in European sense was absent in these early writings on India. Major theoretical insights for this negative assessment were drawn mainly from various studies on Asian societies by Karl Marx and J.J.S.Maine.³⁴

The nationalist writings, intensively composed during the beginning of the 20th century, were another response to the early European's characterization of Indian society and polity. In this new synthesis, though the idea of 'evolution' or 'progress' was not perceived and articulated, various segmented events were brought into light that provided a base for all evolutionary approaches towards Indian social formation during the later period. The main task of the nationalist historians was to stress that there was a political awareness in ancient India based on sophisticated ideas of how the state was to be organized. The Orientalists' assumptions such as despotism, lack of political awareness, absence of trade due to lack of surplus, backwardness of Hindu religion, etc., were taken up in series of studies. It was highlighted that the ancient Indian culture and

33 The concept of Asiatic Mode of Production was first articulated by Karl Marx in his series of articles, see, S.Avinen, *Karl Marx on Colonialism and Modernization*, New York, 1969. Also, see, K.A.Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, 7th print, Yale University Press, 1970.

34 Marx Daniel Thorner, 'Marx on India and the Asiatic Mode of Production', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, no.9, vol.IX, 1966, pp.33-66. H.S.Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, London, 1871. For relevant discussion, see, Lawrence Krader, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Sources, Development, and Critique in the Writings of Karl Marx*, Dialectical and Society, Assen. Van Gorcum, The Netherlands, 1975. M.J.K. Thavaraj, 'The Concept of Asiatic Mode of Productions: Its Relevance to Indian History,' *Social Scientist*, vol.12, No.7, July, 1984, pp.26-34. Brendan O.Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Despotism, Historical Materialism and Indian History*, Cambridge, 1989.

civilization had produced political and social institutions, which were equal to those of their imperialist masters. They glorified the institutions like self-government, its assemblies and the so-called village republics of India.³⁵ Benevolent nature of the Indian monarchy, and the role of indigenous ruling dynasties in liberating the country from the rule of foreign kings like Shakas and Kushanas were also given equal stress. Projects of compiling political history of various regions were undertaken giving birth to a new dimension of regional history.³⁶ Like the colonialist historians, the writing of nationalists also centered upon political and dynastic history but their scholarly interpretations were based on the concepts of nationalism and their purpose was to boost the national movement.

Though, no efforts were made to explain changes in the socio-economic aspects and consequent process of political unification, the nationalist writings unearthed various factual details for a systematic study of societal process and historical stages in India. It extended a significant ground for a dynasty of historians, who dominated the territory of history writings for more than three decades. The advantage of theoretical insight from Marxian approach to study European society and the rich factual details emerged out of nationalist writings enabled them to visualize the Indian social formation giving the sense of 'evolution'. In a series of scholarly writings, societal changes in terms of 'mode of production' gradually replaced the 'changelessness' derived from 'Asiatic Mode of Production'. Thus, the real discussion on state formation emerged only during the post-independence period with the coming of these new liberal and socialist ideologies. In the new context, the evolution of feudalism in India became an irresistible subject and the entire historical debates during the post independence period centered on it.

Marxists thinking in Indian historical writing began with the scholarly engagement of B. Datt, who spoke about class struggle and growth of feudalism in early India, and S.A.Dange, who studied the transition of primitive communism to slavery and suggested that there was a slave society during the *Vedic* age.³⁷ Despite the fact that most of their conclusions do not stand scrutiny, it is said that they are the first to detail

35 A.S.Alteker, *State and Government in Ancient India*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1st ed. Varanasi, 1949; *History of the Village Communities in Western India*, University of Bombay, Bombay, 1927.

36 For examples, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Pandiya Kingdom and their Times*, Luzac and Co, London, 1929; *The Colas*, Madras University Press, Madras, 1935.

37 S.A.Dange, *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*, 1st ed., Delhi, 1949. For brief review see, D.N.Jha, *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, Delhi, 1987, p.3.

early Indian society as a changing one. The Marxist ideology, however, gained its real currency when scholars like D.D.Kosambi and R.S.Sharma laid foundation for the understanding of transition of the feudalization. To D.D. Kosambi, historical changes are changes in the means and relations of production. Basically, he emphasized on two-fold model of the emergence of feudalism in India. The first process that he described was called 'feudalism from above'. This was concerned with the transfer of fiscal and administrative rights over land to subordinate chiefs by the king. The second process was explained in terms of the growth of a class of landlords within the village between the state and peasantry. He called this as 'feudalism from below'.³⁸

R.S.Sharma is a central figure in the entire debate on 'Indian feudalism'. Like Kosambi, Sharma also visualizes the societal transition as a process due to changes in the system of production. Based on general anthropological theories of transition from tribe to state, Sharma suggested a tribal based society during the early Vedic period where the people were pastoral and semi-nomadic, which then led to an agricultural based proto-state and proto-class society in the later Vedic period. This phase, according to him witnessed the emergence of small chiefdoms and set the stage for the final emergence of a state and class society in the post Vedic period that reflected a centralized form of government. Finally, when the Mauriyan polity collapsed, the centralized structure gave way to a feudal State formation.³⁹

According to Sharma, the early medieval socio-economic formation was concomitant with a predominantly closed agricultural economy in which coins and their use had become rare, the market system had become extremely limited, traders and merchants had ceased to play a significant role, and towns began to decline and disappeared mainly due to a collapse of external and internal trade. In this scenario, Sharma further states that artisan activity tended to be confined in countryside and therefore a sort of *jajmani* system emerged with cash payments extremely limited.⁴⁰

The land grant system from the 4th century CE onwards has been taken as a main cause for growth of feudal formation. Though land grants had been in practice from about the 1st century BCE, in view of Sharma, it developed certain different

38 D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1956, p.p.175-6. B.D.Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997, p.p.9-10.

39 R.S.Sharma, *Material Culture and Social Formation in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1983, pp.XV-XII.

40 R.S.Sharma, 'Indian Feudalism Retouched', A Review Article, *Indian Historical Review*, vol.1, 1976.

characteristics from about the 3rd and 4th century CE.⁴¹ To overcome the criticism upon his earlier view that State could cause the origin of feudalism, Sharma in the 1980's put forth the view that during the 3rd Century CE there was a social crisis between the producing classes and the ruling classes. He frames these arguments in the context of data on the *kali* age in the *puranas*.⁴² As a result, the state gave up its earlier practice of collecting taxes directly through its agents and then started distributing them among its servant. Instead of it, the State started to assign not only land revenues directly to beneficiaries, but also transition of all sources of revenue and surrender of police and administration function to the different types of donees.⁴³ Due to this transition, the beneficiaries got the power of taxation and they gradually refused to allow the peasants to leave the granted lands. This kind of self-sufficient regional productive units, which increasingly began to emerge, was concomitant with the political fragmentation of the country. All these changes resulted in the rise of new kind of social and political hierarchy based on ownership of land or its revenues. In summing up, the hallmarks of early medieval feudal formation are 1) The domination of class of landlords 2) A class of subject peasantry 3) The collection of rents and labour service from the peasants by the landlords mainly for their own consumption and 4) Rise of *samanta* class of intermediaries between the king and the peasants.⁴⁴

The concept of feudalism, initially formulated by D.D. Kosambi and elaborated upon by R.S. Sharma, is supported by later scholars such as D.N. Jha, B.N.S. Yadava, R.N. Nandi and others. D.N. Jha opines that the Gupta period in India was a period of decentralization when there was decline of urban centres, increase of various taxes, and emergence of new castes and presence of untouchables. His works throw much light on where Sharma's hypothesis is weak especially in comparing western European feudalism with what was prevalent in India. In his comparative study between the Indian feudalism and the European, Jha finds similarities between the subjection of peasantry in early medieval India and emergence of serfdom in early medieval Europe⁴⁵. B.N.S. Yadava explained the emergency of feudalism by emphasizing on the breakdown of the

41 R.S.Sharma, 'Problem of Transition from Ancient to Medieval India in Indian History', *Indian Historical Review*, vol.1, 1974, pp.1-9.

42 R.S.Sharma, 'The Kali Age: A Period of Crisis' in S.N.Mukherjee (ed), *Indian History and Thought: Essay in Honour of A.L.Basham*, Calcutta, 1982, pp.186-203.

43 B.N.S.Yadava, book review article on R.S.Sharma's 'Indian Feudalism', *Indian Historical Review*, vol.7, 1980-81, pp.243-247.

44 Ibid.

45 D.N.Jha, *Ancient India: an Introduction outline*, People Publishing House, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 10-11, R.S.Sharma, *Sudras in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1958, pp.176; *Ancient India*, Delhi, 1978, p.169.

chutuvarna system. Drawing references from the contemporary texts of the 4th and the 5th century CE, he explains the nature of land grants and emergence of social crisis during the early centuries CE.⁴⁶ Like Sharma and Jha, Yadava also compares early medieval Indian situation with Europe and agrees to Sharma's view of peasants' immobility. The reason that they put forth for the confinement of the mobility is growing dependency of the peasantry on the landed intermediaries following the grant of more and more rights to them by the state. According to Yadava, the Hun invasion was yet another cause that contributed to the rise of feudalism in early India.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, several scholars have seriously questioned the concept of Indian feudalism and its applicability to India as a whole. Their main arguments revolve around the question: was Indian feudalism a countrywide phenomenon? Romila Thapar uses the term quasi-feudalism and observes that there was a rise of new class of ruling elites in the context of social mobility created through the process of land donations to religious and social officials in the early medieval period. She therefore, disagrees with Sharma that there was social immobility during this period. She had earlier interpreted that the Arthashastra's depiction of Mauryan State as a unitary state, in which all parts of the empire underwent to some extent the same degree of state administration. In her later views, she however, states 'only the metropolitan state, namely Magadha, would be organized on unitary centralized, whereas the control of the other zones would depend on the local level of authority'.⁴⁸ D.D. Sircar introduces an alternative model, called 'landlordism, to denote the early medieval Indian social formation. The special emphasize of Sharma such as less circulation of coins and the decline of trade in early medieval India are seriously questioned by Sircar. Harbans Mukhia argues that feudalism was not a world system and that only capitalism was the first world system. While questioning the notion of feudalism in India, he highlights the absence of changes at the primary level of the agrarian structure of India during the ancient and early medieval India. He also suggests that instead of a subject peasantry there was a peasant

46 B.N.S.Yadava, 'The Accounts of Kali Age and the Social Transformation Antiquity to Middle Age', *Indian Historical Review*, vol.V, no.1, January, 1978.

47 B.N.S.Yadava, 'Immobility and Subjugation of Indian Peasantry in Early Medieval Complex', *Indian Historical Review*, vol.I, 1974, pp.18-20.

48 Aloka Parasher-Sen has briefly discussed the view of Thapar, see, *Social and Economic History of Early Medieval Deccan: Some Interpretation*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1993, p.13.

mode of production and therefore, to mark serfdom as a base for the medieval social formation is erroneous.⁴⁹

B.D.Chattopadhyaya is one of the important critics of the theory of Indian feudalism.⁵⁰ In his view, the social formation of early medieval period i.e., from the c. 7th to 13th century CE has to be seen in terms of certain fundamental movements within the regional and local level, and not in terms of crisis of a pre-existent, pan Indian social order. It has been argued by him that the major historical process in early Indian history will than have to be identified not by taking an epicentric view, but by keeping in mind the fact historical cultural stages have always been uneven over the subcontinent. In order to deny the Marxist characterization of early medieval India such as absence of trade and decline of urban centers, Chattopadhyaya cites a large number of inscriptional records attesting the existence of internal trade linkages in various parts of India. Similarly, he does not agree with the assumption that the land grants lead to growth of feudalism or political decentralization. Instead of looking at the early Indian society in terms of centralization or decentralization, Chattopadhyaya argues, an alternative method can be taken into account in which the nature of early Indian polity and society can be seen in terms of integration of social groups and regions from larger states. According to him, the span between the 3rd and 7th century CE is marked by a process of local state formation, peasantisation of tribal, caste formation and the appropriation and integration of religious cults.⁵¹ His arguments point out that the sources from various regions of India like Orissa, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, etc., must be fruitfully used if we are to get regional perspective of changes during the early medieval period. This new emphasis on studying regional sources gave rise to the thrust for more evidences as well as new assumptions.

K.A. Nilakanda Sastri brought out the first systematic work on south Indian history. As a historian influenced by nationalist thinking, generally all south Indian dynasties and major political events were brought to light by him.⁵² He tried to show that the south Indian state, especially the Chola state, was a powerful, bureaucratic and centralized state. He glorified the Chola kingship as a Byzantine monarchy in which the

49 Harbans Mukhia (ed), *The Feudalism Debate*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2000, p.vi.

50 Mukhia, Harbans, 'Was there Feudalism in Indian History', *Presidential Address*, Indian History Congress, Waltair, 1979.

51 B.D.Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, op.cit., p.17.

52 K. A. Nilakanda Sastri, *The Colas*, University of Madras (reprint), Madras, 1975.

king is seen as an executive over a vast and powerful bureaucracy and military organization. The Chola State was divided into sub divisions like *mandalam*, *nadu* and *grama* and in each division there was royal officers who represented the central government. Besides visualizing a powerful central government, Sastri's work also gives importance to local self-government by describing the functions of assemblies like *ur*, *sabha* and *nadu*. Until the late 1960's Sastri's method of historical writing and his philosophy were followed by a number of other historians like C. Minakshi, A. Appadorai, T.V. Mahalingam, etc., who followed the same methodology but added considerable new information on south Indian history.⁵³ Thus, a proliferation of studies emerged in the context of south India but little was written on the processes of state formation till Burton Stein disturbed the still waters of South Indian historiography.

In 1980's, there were new developments in south Indian historical writing when scholars from both India and abroad started questioning with new evidence, theories and the conclusions of the Sastri⁵⁴ The first work that seriously challenged the early historian's views of united, centralized and bureaucratic state in early medieval south India was published by Burton Stein after his painstaking study of this area beginning from the 19th century and going backwards in time to the Pallava period. While criticizing Nilakanta Sastri, especially the idea of Byzantine monarchy during the Chola period, Burton Stein puts forth an alternate view. The Cholas and its succeeding dynasties, Stein argues, had been integrated as a state only by ritual sovereignty and politically it consisted of number of independent segments. For him, no state control was maintained over the life of the people within these segments. The model of state that Burton Stein applies against both the feudal and the unitary models came to be known as the 'segmentary State'. This he borrows from the concept introduced by Aiden Southall for the tribal society of the Allurs in African Uganda. According to Southall the characteristic features of the segmentary state are i. limited territorial sovereignty of the centre ii. The so-called centralized government exists along with numerous peripheral focuses of administration and iii. Absence of specialized administrative staff in

53 T.V.Mahalingam, *South Indian Polity*, Madras, 1955. C. Minakshi, *Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas*, University of Madras, Madras, 1977. A.Appadorai, *Economic Conditions in Southern India (1000-1500 A.D)*, 2 vols, University of Madras, Madras, 1936.

54 Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1980.

peripheral areas.⁵⁵ While applying this concept, Stein takes the terms, *nadu* as a key to understand the nature of State formation in south India particularly for the Chola and the Vijayanagara states. He defines *nadu* as a primary geographical and economic unit and calls it as ‘nuclear core region’ under the leadership of chieftains. But the term *nadu* is given various interpretations by historians. The empirical and theoretical focus on the *nadu* is in fact the major contribution of Y. Subbarayalu, who says that ‘the *nadu* was the key to the political geography of the Chola country and it was an important limb of the administrative system of that period’.⁵⁶ To Nilakanta Sastri and T.V. Mahalingam the *nadu* was an assembly that was comprised of the more influential persons of a locality. In Burton Stein’s opinion, however, the political system of the Cholas was only an integration of the several segments, i.e., *nadu* and not a fully centralized state with a centralized mechanism. These segments were supposed to be integrated, on the one hand, by royal patronage to *brahmins* and temples and, on the other, by ceremonial and ritual acknowledgement of Chola kingship. Based on their geographical nature and their relation with the centre, Burton Stein divides the *nadus* into three categories., viz., Central *nadu*, intermediate *nadu* and peripheral *nadu*. Of these, the political relation of Cholas appeared only in central *nadu*, while others had only ritual relationship with the state.⁵⁷ Few other scholars took up Stein’s model of state and his approach to interpret the medieval social and political structure, though they did not agree with him on all the points.

Kenneth Hall’s thesis in his *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of Cōlas* is not much different from that of Burton Stein’s—both try to study the local autonomy of *nadu*, the supra village region and the inability of the Chola state in extending its political authority over it.⁵⁸ Stein’s purpose is to study how the *nadu* integrated to the State system of the Chola—to him it was done through ritual hegemony rather than political. But Hall’s intention is to closely look at the structure of the *nadu* and to analyze the relationship between the *nadu* and *nagaram* institutions in order to understand the political authority of the state. In his views, there were consistent attempts from the State to dismantle the power and local authority of the *nadu*. *Nadu* cannot be taken as

55 A.W. Southall, *Alur Society: A Study in Process and Types of Domination*, Cambridge, 1956, pp.248-9. Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society In Medieval South India*, op.cit., p.265.

56 Y.Subbarayalu, *Political Geography of the Chola Country*, Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, Madras, 1973, p.19.

57 See, R.Champakalakshmi, ‘Peasant State and Society in Medieval south Indian’, A Review article, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol.18, nos. 3 and 4, 1981, pp.411-26.

58 Kenneth Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of Colas*, Elmira, New York, 1978.

an administrative devise made for the convenience of imperial regime. But it is of a natural development—an ‘organic centre of the developing peasant economy’.⁵⁹ It was a ‘local marketing territory’ and its economic functions are primary than all others, viz. administrative, religious, kinship etc. *Nagaram*, says Hall, served as a market center to the *nadu*. At the beginning, probably before the political intervention of the Cholas, the *nagaram* remained as an integral part of the *nadu* system. And it emerged as a ‘natural marketing center’ from the existing agrarian order, within the peasant dominated *nadu*.⁶⁰ Though both institutions maintained some sort of symbiotic relationship, the *nagaram* (organization of traders as well as name of traders’ settlement) remained subordinated to the *nadu* peasants. The cooperation between these two corporate intuitions was disturbed by the Cholas through their various initiatives viz., establishing the *brahmadeyas* settlements, royal patronage to the temple and creating *valanadu* division of administration.

Cholas’ most important attempt in this direction was initially executed through ‘their treatment of *nagaram* as autonomous revenue collection units’, as that of *taniyur brahmadeya*, which had direct revenue link with the state and thus no longer dependable to the *nattar* assembly, the *nadu*. Having freed from the authority of *nattar*, the landed local elite, *nagaram* became directly responsible to the State. As a result, the state could collect some additional charges from merchants. Now it turns to be a struggle between the State and the *nagaram* for power (over *nagaram*) and freedom (from the State). *Nagaram* institution tried to develop its network to participate in higher-level commercial transaction. The state had to encourage this not only for its material advantage but it also broke the local autonomy of the *nadu*. *Nagaram*, having local merchants as its members, developed its relationship with itinerary merchant’s organization. It provided not only wider commercial possibilities and independence from the *nadu* holder, but also able to have the service of itinerant merchant’s mercenary troops. It was maintained by the traders in order to safeguard their caravans and to have safety in long distance transaction. The relation became stronger and visible during the 11th century. Thus, *nagaram* was able to become as a supra-*nadu* level of economic organization. At present, the commercial groups developed their political alliance with *valanadu* (supra-*nadu* level of administrative division) level of state administrators or

59 Ibid, p.123.

60 Ibid,p.187.

subordinate rulers to the State. Having their own military troupes, the commercial groups supported the long distance royal military expedition by assigning their army. It is said that large share went into the missionary trader from the plundered wealth. All this illustrates the wealth and power of the traders and the weakness and dependency of the state.

The widening of the operational network of *nagaram* merchant at supra-*nadu* level and the state initiation of *valanadu* revenue division certainly shattered the power and local autonomy of the *nadu* holders. Their pecuniary income from the newly developed commercial activities became lesser and they were no longer able to control, collect taxes and expect the collective operation with *nagaram*, and *brahmadeya* members. Therefore, they needed to respond with the arising new political and economic horizon. Formation of *citrameli periyanaadu*, a constituent body of several *nadus*, is considered as one such effort of *nattar* to protect their local autonomy. Thus, they were able to maintain their relationship (dominant) with the *nagaram*, but now at supra-*nadu* level.

The regained collaboration of merchants and landed elites and the failure of the Chola state to stop this emerging relationship ultimately diluted the power of the State. Now the subordinate rulers or the regional official of the state, who struggled for their local autonomy from the state, joined the *nagaram* and *nadu* holders, who also suffered from the authority of the state and over taxation. All these developments, Kenneth Hall concludes, stopped the centralizing process of the Chola and finally culminated in the decline of the state. However, previous institutional cooperation between *nadu* and *nagaram* still existed and continued, but now not at *nadu* level, rather at supra-*nadu* level.

G.W.Spencer attempts to dismantle the conceptual construction of what he calls 'conventional historiography'. He brushes aside the conventional writing as mere 'catalogue of chronology of campaigns and alleged conquests' in which the sources have been studied but not been properly interpreted. He calls the 'Unitary State' model of Sastri as 'a figment of scholarly imagination'.⁶¹

Spencer draws his ideas to understand the nature of State during the Chola period from Duby's work, entitled *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and*

61 George W. Spencer, *The Politics of Expansion, The Chola Conquest of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya*, New Era Publication, Madras, 1983. p.5

Peasants from the 7th to the 12th Century AD. He finds that many of the attitudes discussed in Duby's study are 'strikingly similar to those which motivated the Chola State'.⁶² Unlike his predecessor, Spencer attempts to understand the nature of State in a distinct way by analyzing the overseas expeditions of Chola rulers to Sri Lanka and South East Asia. In the 'conventional writings' of Sastri, these overseas expeditions are given glorious place and they are highly prized as indicatives of the diplomatic, administrative, and militaristic capability of Chola State. And it is one of the indicative components of the Unitary and Centralized State of the Cholas. The South East Asian invasion of Rajendra I is a prime incentive in Spencer's conceptualization, which he says quite different from the previous overseas expeditions of the Cholas. The analysis indicates that to some extent the political authority of Chola was recognized in Sri Lanka for a reasonable time span. There are adequate epigraphic evidences, which illustrate their political involvement in local affairs of Sri Lanka (for example appointment of a Chola's representative). But in case of South East Asia there is no such evidence. Therefore, Spencer concludes that the interference of Chola in Malaya peninsula was a short-lived one. He questions the previous readings on Tanjore inscription, which is a sole pointer for the Sri Vijaya invasion of Chola and lines up a list of places, which Rajendra Chola conquered. He points out the failure of the previous scholarship in understanding 'eulogy and kingship',⁶³ thus decoding the real meaning from the inscribed matters. In brief, the Srivijaya experience of Chola poses to him as 'a brief raid', mere 'plundering raid' for accumulation of wealth.⁶⁴ Here he reminds the role of 'plunder' in the political history of Tamils right from the beginning of the classical period.

Accepting Stein's view, Spencer calls the political system that existed at that time as 'fragile political alliances',⁶⁵ an alliance among the several independent political units (segments to Stein). The alliance was achieved by propagating the ritualistic idealization of kingship, therefore 'sacred kingship' by portraying the king as prime devotee to God, patron of Brahmans, priest and poets and thus 'the upholder of society and cosmic order'.⁶⁶

62 Ibid, p.11.

63 Ibid, p.4.

64 Ibid, p.2.

65 Ibid, p.6.

66 Ibid.

‘The sacred kingship’ was propagated to hide the internal political weakness of the State. To have a strong political power, the State needed to have a strong standing army. Spencer makes a detailed analysis about the nature of army and the way in which they were mobilized. He tends to call the Chola army as an ‘ad hoc unit’ recruited and maintained by locally influenced chiefs.⁶⁷ It was therefore a ‘temporary assemblage of different warrior units’ mobilized at the time of conquest (raid?).⁶⁸ And to mobilize the military strength the state virtually depended on the wish and will of the local chiefs. Therefore, the prime motive of the State was to win over the support of local chiefs. It is here that ‘the sacred kingship’ works, since it cannot be done by showing political authority in which the State is shown weak.

Yet, another point that has been used by Spencer to strengthen his arguments is the relationship between the chiefs and the State. Regarding this, he, like Burton Stein, advocates ‘the state within the state’ formula.⁶⁹ The chiefs at local level performed all kinds of duties, which the kingship supposed to do at the central level. In a sense they imitated the State. The imitation included supporting the Brahmans and priests, waging warfare/raids with other chiefs, providing protection, maintaining the regulatory activities, etc. Here, Spencer further goes against the view of Sastri by giving new interpretation with regard to the adaptation of king’s title by chiefs. To Nilakanta Sastri, it was to accept the political supremacy of Kingship. Most of such titleholders were looked as royal officials, deploying the administrative duty of the state. But Spencer looks it as an act of ‘volunteerism’ by the chiefs for their own benefits. The volunteerism brings prestige showing the linkages with the State (or powerful domain of a powerful chief) so as to claim their supremacy within their domain and to override their rival chiefs. Here, again Spencer indicates the mutual beneficial relationship between the Brahmans and powerful peasants (the chiefs). The collaborative force ultimately weakened the State.

Nevertheless, Stein’s segmentary theory is criticized from various scholars. Altogether, the main weakness of Stein’s work that has been pointed out is his lack of empirical evidences to support his thesis. His perceptions of local title holders as powerful chiefs at the micro level *nadu* segments, absence of tax payment to the king’s government, absence of a standing army and emergence of *periyannattar* as a powerful

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.25.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.26.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.27.

chief at the local level have been run through by Y. Subbarayalu. He states that Stein either forgot to take note of certain obvious factors or ignores them in his enthusiastic application of the segmentary concept to the Chola State. D.N. Jha has been a strong critic of the segmentary state model. He has devoted a whole article to describe the weakness of Burton Stein's theory. However, one cannot altogether abandon the idea of Burton Stein. He is the first historian who gave great importance to peripheral region to understand the difference in the power structure of the Chola polity. Some recent empirical studies show that there was variation of power, that the Chola's political authority over peripheral region was less, that the role of the royal functionaries over a peripheral region is marginal and so one of them can be applied to regions like the Kongu.

South Indian social formation has also been studied in terms of feudalism by some historians. The high priests among them are Rajan Gurukkal and Kesavan Veluthat. Rajan Gurukkal has highlighted the gradual changes in south India from a tribal society to feudal society. According to him, the people in early Iron Age society were tribal while the later Iron Age society was a combination of forms of subsistence such as hunting, gathering, plough agriculture and craft production. During this period, the social division based on economic factors slowly made its appearance. From the 5th century onwards these people were divided into domestic segments called *kudi* and formed a settlement based on kingship called *ur*. Each *ur* was a self sustaining system based on the clan labors of the concerned descent groups. The inhabitants of this *ur* were named *kudimakkal*. Moreover each descent group had its headman namely *kilar* who collected and redistributed resources of the *ur*. These new social settlements led to formation of chiefdoms. From the 6th and the 7th century onwards, the powerful chieftains dominated others and their lands were captured and integrated with them, by which they could become a king of larger area. In order to maintain his status, the king distributed the land to the persons who helped during the wartime and to *brahmans*, who helped in the ritual practices. This distribution of land contributed to social hierarchy, later it took the shape of *jati* and it ultimately led to the feudalization of state.⁷⁰

The emergence of this social formation determined by a new mode of production is the basic theme in many of the Gurukkal's studies. He visualizes it as a parallel

70 Rajan Gurukkal, 'Characterizing Ancient Society, The Case of South India', *Presidential Address*, Indian History Congress, 59th Session, Punjab University, 1998.

process of transition from kin labour to non-kin labour, millet to paddy, clan and kin ties to hereditary occupation groups and caste. According to Gurukkal, the Brahman was the 'signifier of the evolving alternative mode of production involving relations of non-kin labour and juridico-political system'. And '...growing number of Brahman households was an important phenomenon, for it meant the progressive disintegration of the system of productive relations based kinship on the one hand and the corresponding emergence of an alternative system with the potential to evolve from within...'⁷¹

Kesavan Veluthat, who proposed the approach of 'south Indian feudalism' have undertaken a detailed analysis on the political structure of early medieval south India and visualized it as a pyramidically organized hierarchy. It was more similar to European feudal structure with the king at the top, with the feudatory chieftains immediately below him, the local groups such as *nadu*, *sabha*, and *nagaram*, and the tenants and cultivators below these groups, and finally the landless labour at the bottom. In his discussion on the role of chiefs and their relation with other main ruling dynasties of south India, Veluthat emphasizes that it is almost similar to lord-vassal relationship or Europe which include the characteristics of the military obligation of the chiefs to the overlords, their obligation to attend the overlords courts for the protection they received from the overlord, the annual tribute they paid to the overlord and so on. According to him, there existed a decentralized State during the pre-Rajaraja period, which was centralized during the period of Rajaraja I and it again became decentralized during the post-Rajaraja I period. In his general view on family of chiefs in south India, Kesavan Veluthat writes:

'One sees three clear stages in the fortunes of these chiefs under the Cholas. Till the close of the 10th century i.e., about the middle of the region of Rajaraja I, the situation was almost as if affair continued relatively unchanged from the time of Pallavas. For about another century from the beginning of the eleventh, one is struck by the absence of reference in the record to the chief ruling in the localities. Members of the chiefly family however, figure as state officials in the records. Towards the end of the 11th century we see that they reassert themselves, as it were, with a vengeance, for other is uprecedently profusion of references to both the number of the chiefs and the ranges of their activities. This pattern fits in neatly with the relatively weak officialdom of the central government in the pre-Rajaraj-I period'.⁷²

71 Rajan Gurukkal, 'Greater Transformation in Early Kerala', an unpublished paper presented in a conference on 'Revisiting Transition', in Jawaharlal Nehru University, March, 2007.

72 Kesavan Veluthat, *The Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993, p.21.

Apart from Marxist historians, there is another group of historians who neither support the feudalism nor the segmentary model of the state. Thus, scholars like Y. Subbarayalu, Noboru Karashima, James Heitzman and R.Champakalakshmi look at the state formation of south India in their own particular ways. To explain the nature of the Chola state, Y. Subbarayalu suggests a new model 'early state' in which the relations between rulers and ruled is characterized by political domination of the former and tributary obligation of the later. He says 'many of these characteristics (of early state as defined by Henri T.M. Classen and Petu Skalnic) may be recognized in the Chola state: the pivotal role of the king, a complex, stratified society divided into at least two basic strata viz., the ruler and the ruled, presence of full-time government functionaries doing more than one task at a time, government revenue according from both tax and tributary and government tending towards centralization and devoting much of activities in its own legitimization'.⁷³

When scholars of early south Indian history and society were engaged in sort of intellectual heresy by agreeing and disagreeing with feudal and segmentary models, Noboru Karashima intervened with his new statistical methodology. In his early studies, Karashima challenged the perception of unchanging village community.⁷⁴ His micro level analysis on nature and pattern of landholding shows the emergence of private land holding initially in brahmadeya villages and than in non-brahmadeya villages. With response to segmentary and peasant state model of Stein, Karashima's analyzed the contemporary revenue terms and titles, and stated that there was a certain degree of centralization during the middle of the Chola period. Now revenues were collected from peasants and there were state officials even at the local levels. Karashima argues, 'efforts were made by these kings to build up a centralized administrative network to integrate the state politically by destroying the barriers between *nadus* and incorporating them into the imperial administration'.⁷⁵ Therefore, 'especially in its middle period which coincides with the reigns of such powerful kings as Rajaraja I, Rajendra I and Kulottunka I—was bureaucratic, centralized, and vigorously intrusive with respect to

73 Y. Subbarayalu, 'The Chola State', *Studies in History*, vol.IV, no.2, 1982, pp.265-306.

74 Noboru Karashima, 'Whispering of Inscriptions' in Kenneth R. Hall (ed.), *Structure and Society in Early South India, Essays in Honour of Noboru Karashima*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p.47.

75 Noboru Karashima, *South Indian History and Society: Studies from Inscriptions A.D.850-1800*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. XXXVI.

localities of the hinterland'.⁷⁶ Karashima also rejects the theory of south Indian feudalism particularly during the Chola by saying 'I regard the Chola period as one when the formation of a centralized state reached a certain degree of completion, and therefore feudalism could have come into existence only after the decline of Chola rule'.⁷⁷

James Heitzman's work concentrates on the intermediate level for understanding state formation in South India. He introduced the new concept of lordship or dominion, borrowed from the work of Otto Brunenr, based on of Western Europe.⁷⁸ The 11th century, according the Heitzman, was a significant period in south Indian state formation when the Chola state was able to strengthen their power and institutionalizing the surplus extraction and distribution. Besides, there was also a simultaneous process of emergence of landed warlords who were previously attached to the village communities and their kinsmen and later began to bargain with the state, to use honorific titles and to act as local leaders. While criticizing feudalism, he states that 'secular grants of land are very few and gifts to the Brahmans did not lead to the setting up of a separate political or military power...'.⁷⁹

The growth of urban centers and trade has been studied by relating it with the process of state formation in the early medieval south India by R.Champakalakshmi. Questioning the fundamentals of Stein's hypothesis, as well as those of earlier scholars who envisaged that there was no change in the structure and nature of the *nadu*, her work goes on to systematically show how the *nadus* of the Pallava period were significantly different from those of the Pandya and Chola periods. Further, this was related to the changes in the agrarian system and this ultimately led to the growth of temple centered agrarian settlements and finally *nagaram* or urban settlements during the Chola period.⁸⁰ Thus the south Indian state was far from 'segmentary' or 'feudal'⁸ rather, there were several forces of economic, political, social and ideological integration that ultimately led to the Cholas exercising considerable control through institutions like the *agrahara*, *brahmadeya*, *nagarams* and so on. The latter also

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid, p.XXX.

78 James Heitzman, 'State Formation in South India, 850-1280', *Indian Economic Social History Review*, Vol.24, No.1, 1987, pp.35-61; *Gift of Power*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997.

79 James Heitzman, *Gift of Power*, op.cit., 15.

80 Champakalakshmi, R., *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India 300 BC to 1300*, Oxford University Publication, New Delhi, 1996, p.30.

contributed to the functioning of the state. Similarly through her specific study on *taniyur* settlements, Champakalakshmi tried to demonstrate that the transition from brahmadeya to *taniyur*, during the ninth to thirteenth centuries signified the Cholas 'institutionalization and regularization of local loyalties under the royal ideology of legitimacy'.⁸¹

We have discussed above various perceptions regarding the nature of sociopolitical formation in early medieval India. In common, all these theories have been concentrating on nuclear or river valley areas of the subcontinent, for example, the Gangatic valley of northern India or the Kaveri basin of Tamilnadu. In this sense, they fail to study the state formation of regions independent of these core areas. Thus culturally, historically, and ecologically differing regions within south India, have yet to be taken up for detailed empirical studies. As stated, the Kongu region was one such region, which is ecologically and politically different from other parts of south India. In existing historiography, this region has been given a different characterization. For instance, to Sastri, the Kongu country, was one of the few *mandalams* of the highly centralized state of the imperial Cholas. To Burton Stein, Kongu country was a peripheral zone in the Chola segmentary state system over which the Chola power was relatively less. In the view of Marxist historians, the Kongu rulers took the shape of officials during period of Rajaraja-I and again restored their power over this region during the post Rajaraja era. However, none of these scholars has discussed in detail how the state society and thereby the state system gradually emerged in this region. Moreover, the writing of these scholars failed to focus on the nature and course of State formation as it differs from region to region that were mainly defined according to its ecological features and geographical location. In this regard, in the present study we intend to move away from these existing interpretations to look at the Kongu as a distinct geographical region of south India and to study the emergence of full-fledged state as a process which highlights in terms of factors within this region and not consider it only as a part of unitary or fragmentary limb of the Chola state. In this context, in the present study we owe much to the views of scholars like B.D.Chattopadhyaya. They emphasize that when one studies the social and political formation of a particular region,

81 R.Champakalakshmi, 'Reappraisal of a Brahmanical Institution: The Brahmadeya and its Ramifications in Early Medieval South India' in Kenneth R. Hall (ed.), *Structure and Society in Early South India*, Essays in Honour of Noboru Karashima, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001. pp.59-84.

its ecological and geographical sphere should be taken into account. B.D.Chattopadhyaya has particularly argued that the process can be studied as an expansion of state society within a region. Also, they point out that the change from one socio-political phase to another should be clearly emphasized upon along with the integration of these changes with those at the economic level on one hand, and the ideological level on the other.

Chapter-II

Mapping the Region: Physical and Cultural Geography

The *Kongu* region does not exactly fit into any geographical category such as river valley, hilly region, forested area, desert zone, etc. However, if one considers its physiognomic features, it can be treated as a semi-arid area having its major portion occupied by hills and forest. The Western and the Eastern Ghats almost encircle the region providing a natural boundary. Among the five ecological divisions of early Tamil literary traditions, the region is identical with *kurinji* and *mullai*, the land of hills and forests. Some later literatures and epigraphic records refer this region by the name of *malainadu*, country of hills. Moreover, the ecological influence over its inhabitants can also be best understood by the names of tribes who belonged to this area. The suffix *mala* (hills) appears with the tribe names such as *malaikoundan*, *malai vellalar*, *malaikaran*, *malai nayakan*, etc. Such names are rarely found in other parts of Tamilakam. In addition to its physical environment, there are also cultural, social and political aspects that considerably distinguish the region from the rest of Tamilakam. For example, all available sources portray some sorts of semi-tribal socio-cultural life with the institutional practice of cattle raiding, inter tribal warfare, hero worship, etc., upto 9th century CE. But it was not a case of other regions where the semi-tribal cultural formation had disappeared long before with the end of the early historic period. The local dialect, Kongu Tamil also shows its unique cultural identity.

1. Physical Geography

Different assumptions have been placed upon the connotation of the name 'Kongu', through which the region has been identified since early days. According to a prominent view, the word 'Kongu' is referred to honey and nectar of flower. It helps to logically conclude that having major part surrounded by hills and forest, during the ancient period the region could have been famous for honey and nectar of flower and therefore derived the name.¹ On the other hand, the anthropological approach traces its origin from the name of early inhabitants of this region, known as *kongar*. They are said to have had the habit of wearing the garland made up of *konganam* flowers, which is found in abundance in this area.² Similarly, the word Kongu is also connected with the Tamil word *Kangu* meaning 'edge' or 'boundary'. As this region formed the border of

¹ K.S. Vaidyanathan, *The Ancient Geography of the Kongu Country*, Bangalore, 1983, p.9.

² V.Ramamurthi, *History of Kongu*, Madras, 1986, pp.20-21.

Map 1: Physical Geography of Ancient Kongu



Source: V.Ramamurthi, *History of Kongu*, Madras, 1986.

the Chera, Chola and Pandiya territories, it might have been called as *kangu*, which later changed into Kongu. Despite the different interpretations, it is clear that the name is to denote its geographical distinction.

Since ancient period, the region has been treated as a separate territorial division. The region was known at various times in different names such as *Adhiraja Mandalam*, *Chola-Kerala Mandalam*, *Ezhukarai Nadu*, *Kongu Mandalam*, *Onbathukarai Nadu* and *Veera Chola Mandalam*. The earliest reference is found in the classical Tamil literatures.³ It frequently figures in medieval Tamil literatures and epigraphic records as well. Two medieval poems⁴ are often cited to demarcate the boundaries of early Kongu. According to them, the northern border of this region is identified with *perumpalai* and the southern with *vaikavur*, east with Kulithalai and west with *vellimalai*. The whole region is situated between 12°-25°N and 10°-15°N latitude and between 75°-40 and 77°-50 E longitude with an approximate area of 7,500 sq miles covering five modern districts of Tamil Nadu viz., Coimbatore, Namakkal, Erode, Salem and Dharmapuri, and some parts of Karur, Madurai and Dindigal districts. It shares its western and northern boundaries with the two modern states, Kerala and Karnataka respectively. However, the political boundary was subjected to constant alteration owing to the internal political circumstances. In this study, our focus is not to probe into the imperative of political predicament, but on its natural boundary/setting. The definition given in the aforesaid poems precisely fits into a natural boundary, a circular area, surrounded by a series of mountain ranges with a few openings.

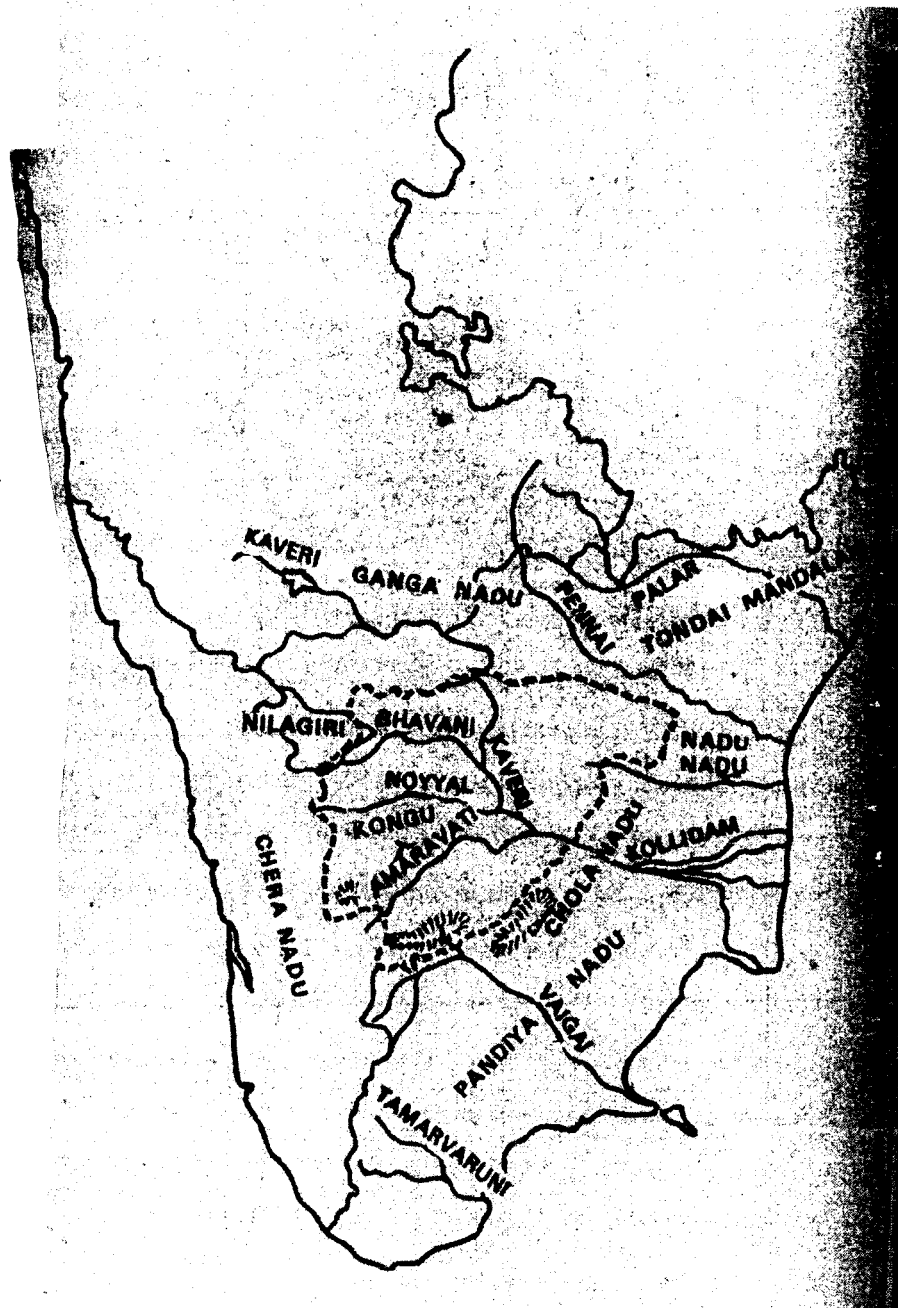
To begin from the northwest, the Talaimalai and Bargur hill ranges are situated on the northwest border of Kongu, and they further go towards northeast up to the Toppur hills. Manavaram, Manjavade, and Kottai are the three passes that help to cross the Toppur hills ranges. The Toppur hills are adjoined southwards by the Servarayas hills, which continue further east. The Kalvarayan hills in western Salem and the

³ For example, *Kuruntogai*, *Silappadikaram*, *Manimekalai* and *Maduraikkanji* speak about early inhabitants of Kongu. *Patirrupattu*, *Akananuru*, *Purananuru*, etc refers some chiefs, who ruled Kongu during the Sangam period.

⁴ Vadakku thalamalaiyam vaikavur therkku
kudakku velli poruppu kunru-kidakku
kulithandalai culum kaviricul Nada
kulithandalai alavum Kongu

Vadakku Perumpalai vaikavur therkku
Kudakku poruppu velli kuntur- kidakkum
Kulithandalai mēvum kaviricul nattu
Kulithandalai alavum kongu

Map 2: Physical Features of Kongu



Source: V.Ramamurthi, *History of Kongu*, Madras, 1986.

Kollimalai in Namakkal mark the northeastern and the eastern boundary respectively. There is a gap between the southern part of Kollimalai and the Kodaikanal hill ranges. The river Kaveri emerges to flow into the southern Tamil Nadu through this gap. Located on southeastern border, the Kodaikanal hills separate the Kongu region from the Eastern Madurai district. They go westwards up to Anamalai hills, which is marked as the southern border of Kongu. Here, Kongu is shut by mountain chains of the Western Ghats, of which the Vekkunkavu hills on western border and Nilagiris hills lie on the northwest. In between these two ranges and that of Anamalai, there is a pass called Palaghat gap, which connects the Kongu with western coast. The ancient trade transactions between Kongu and Rome had been carried through the Palaghat gap. Apart from these major hills ranges, there are as many as 42 hills ranges scattered throughout the Kongu and therefore it can be called as plateau. These hills not only embellish the region, but also have interrelation with the socioeconomic and cultural life of the Kongu.

The area encircled by these mountains ranges exhibits a composite physical environment and landscape. The river Kaveri bifurcates this region and flows towards southeast direction while her tributaries make the middle portion fertile and alluvial plain. If we exclude these central parts, the remaining areas are simply of forest-covered and dry pasture lands. The river Kaveri was considered as marker to divide the region into two broad areas. The terms *kuda kongu* and *mala kongu* appear in these references⁵ to denote two physical divisions situated on either side of the Kaveri. The area, which lies on the western side, was called *kuda kongu* and that of eastern side *mala kongu*. The whole region including these two divisions was named *elukarainadu* or land of seven rivers.⁶ At present, if we divide the region based on flowing of the Kaveri, the Coimbatore, Erode Districts and Palani Taluk of Dindigul district are situated in its western bank between Palani hills in the south and Nilgiri hills in the north. These regions which relatively are favorable for agriculture getting watered by the rivers like Bhavani, Amaravati and Noyyal in addition to the river Kaveri. Most of them are rising

⁵ For example, the *velvikudi* plates reads 'the king crossed the rivers Kaveri with its groves of trees and tanks of budding flowers and subjugated *malakongam* with the help of his beautiful long bow', see Epigraphy of India, Vol.XVII.No.1, p.301. Seevaramangalam Plates dated to 784 CE refer the annexation of *kuda kongu* by the *Pandiyas*.

⁶ However during the medieval period there were some new parts annexed with Kongu in the eastern side. Hereafter, the previous divisions were stopped being mentioned in the contemporary sources and, instead, began to mention the two new divisions of Kongu i.e., *ten Kongu* (south Kongu) and *vada kongu* (North Kongu). The old territories *kuda kongu* and *mala Kongu* were clubbed together and came to be identified by single names as *vada Kongu*. The new additional parts encompassing the southern boundary of Kongu were called as *ten kongu*. Similarly, new the previous name of *elukarai nadu* or land of seven rivers was replaced by *onbadukarainadu* or the land of nine rivers. See. K.S.Vaidyanathan, *op.cit.*, 1983, p.38.

from the mountain ranges bordering the west and northern side of Kongu and flowing towards southeast. Amaravati has its sources in the Anamalai and passes through Udumalaipettai and Dharapuram areas to join the Kaveri at Karur. In its course, it receives water of many streams viz., the Uppar and Shanmuganadi which rises from Palani hills. Bhavani is more or less a perennial stream. Before joining with Kaveri at Bhavani Taluk, its water resource is largely utilized for irrigation in the Coimbatore regions. Yet, another major river, the Noyyal originating from Boluvampatti valley of the Velliyankiri hills flows above 170 kilometres from west to east through Coimbatore and Palladam. It remains dry for the most part of a year and its main source of water comes from the northeast monsoon.

The arid region between Kolli hills in south and Kalvarayan hills in north i.e. Salem, Dharmapuri and Namakkal region, lay on the eastern bank of Kaveri. In comparison to Western region, this is a less fertile area and gets water from some small rivers originating from the mountains in the eastern and northern part of Kongu. Omalur, Palaimalai, Mettur, Namakkal, Tiruchenkodu and Karur are very close to Kaveri and get irrigated from the same. On her course, Kaveri is joined by Chinnar, Thoppur river, Sarbhanganadi and Thirumanimuthar, all flow from north to southwest direction. The Sarabhanganadi is formed by the union of two streams namely Omalur east river and Omalur west river. It passes through Tiruchenkodu and fall in Kaveri near Kaveripatti. Tirumanimuthar, also called Salem river, is a fusion of two streams raising from Servaroyas hills. It runs towards southwest to join Kaveri at Namakkal.

Though, the river system of Kongu sounds attributing to a well-developed irrigational array, in effect their agrarian utility is considerably very less. Most rivers are seasonal watering only at the time of monsoons. Kaveri, one of the major rivers, until it passes Erode its bed is rocky, its flow is rapid, and therefore hardly any irrigation under it. The cultivation depends largely upon ground water reservoirs like taking water from wells, tanks, etc. The atmospheric condition of Kongu is highly capricious in character. Generally, it exemplifies a dry or arid environment except few hill stations, which have cool and blessing climate. Situated in a rain shadow area, the degree of rainfall within the region is not only varying, but also scanty, uncertain and ill-distributed. There are three seasons viz., summer, the South West Monsoon and the northeast monsoon in which rainfall can be expected. The summer rains commences in the later half of April and heavy rainfall, sometime, acquires in May. The southwest monsoon, beginning in

the first week of June, is especially beneficial to Bhavani Taluk. It is in most cases uncertain and irregular due to the mass of clouds being prevented by the hills bordering on the western and northern portion of the region. The Palaghat gap plays a crucial role by letting the monsoon wind to pass through it and thus bring substantial rainfall with the addition of blessing environment to the regions surrounding closer to it. The southwest monsoon continues until August and hereafter it slowly is retreated. Beginning of October witnesses the setting of northeast monsoon, which extend until November. Relatively, northeast monsoon is more propitious and during its course rainfall, heavy and moderate, appear throughout the region.

In spite of the variation in climate and rainfall, agriculture and agrarian activities of Kongu did not lost its momentum. The ploughmen of these region, including immigrants from neighbouring regions and original inhabitants, who modified their previous occupation to agriculture, particularly during the medieval and later periods, were well acquainted with their climate. The selection of crop was based on a certain irrigational advantage as well as on the nature and quality of soil. The nature of soil also differs from place to place. The western portion of the region forms rocky, red variety of sandy and gravelly soil. The relatively high fertile red and black soils are specific to certain areas. On the eastern portion, the soil is generally black, clay, mixed or black loamy, black sand, mixed or loamy, red farruginous and sand or gravel. Cotton is the most preferred commercial crop cultivated generally in block soil tracts. It is grown to great extent in Coimbatore, Palladam, Avinasi, Namakkal, Tiruchenkodu, Omalur, Salem, and Rasipuram region. The remarkable development of textile industries can be attributed to the availability of cotton in good variety.⁷ Dry crops like millet formed a good percentage of the cultivated area. *Kambu, ragi, cholam, samai*, etc., are some chief millets cultivated here. While rice, which needs a good soil and irrigation, does not form the staple crop except in some places, the oil seeds such as groundnut, castor, and gingili are considerably cultivated. Apart from these commercial and food crops, the Namakkal region is also known for fruit and vegetable cultivation just as mango to Salem, spices to Yarcadu and banana and jack fruits to Kolli hills region. Till recent times, the diet of the common people consisted of *ragi, cholam* and *kambu*, but nowadays rice has become popular except in villages where paddy is not grown and where the staple food continues to be *ragi, cholam* and *kambu*.

⁷ B.S.Baliga, *Madras District Gazetteers, Coimbatore*, Government of Madras, 1866, p.325.

The floral diversity is yet another ensuing outcome of climatic and rainfall discrepancy. Though there was large-scale deforestation in wake of expansion of agriculture during the recent centuries, a quarter of total area of the region is still covered by forest ranging from dry deciduous to thick forest. Most hills and their adjoining areas are occupied by thick forests, which are rich in commercially significant items such as teak, sandalwood, rosewood, *vagai*, *pillaimaruthu*, etc. The forests of eastern Kongu are well sheltered and are suitable for the growth of timber and coffee plantation. The Shervaroys, Pachamalai and Kollimalai contain timber in good quality including sandalwood trees.⁸ It can be possibly argued that the forest-clad areas of Kongu attracted the early gatherers and hunters and later pastoral people to settle around it. On their part, they gave a distinct social and cultural identity to the place where they settled in. The grazing land in and around the forest areas was a great source for the cattle, for which Kongu is well known from early historic times. Cattle and their significant role in socioeconomic formation of Kongu receive frequent references in the contemporary sources. Even at present, the Kangeyam region of Kongu is specifically known for breeding bull. The sheep are of two kinds, *semmariadu* and *kurumbadu*. The later are usually reared by the *kurumbar* and yield excellent wool.

The region is remarkably rich in its mineral wealth. Limestone is found in abundance in the hills near Madukarai. Building stones and feldspar are found on the Nilgiri mountains and Erode respectively. Asbestos occurs near Perundurai, Muthapalayam and near Bargur in the Bhavani taluk and barite in hillocks about half a mile west of Kuruchchi in Bhavani Taluk. Iron ore is found in several places. In Coimbatore and Erode districts, it is found in a rich bed in the Doddancombai forest in the Gobichettipalayam taluk near Hallagomalai and Chinnamalai. Five principal groups of magnetic iron beds in the Salem and Namakkal regions are 1) Kanja-malai, 2) Godu-malai, 3) Singapuram 4) Kolli-malai, 5) Tirta-malai.⁹ Manganese has been detected in the black sand from Virapaneli in the Coimbatore taluk. Quartz of very fine quality is found in many places, especially in the village of Patiyur near Kangeyam. Gold has been found in some auriferous veins in the Gobichettipalayam taluk and it was at one time worked near Veppana-palli.

2. Cultural Geography

⁸ F.J.Richards (ed), *Madras District Gazetteers, Salem*, Government Press, 1919, p.175.

⁹ Ibid, p.323.

Though high mountain terrains and forest-covered area bounded the region, they were never been a barrier cutting off its relation/communication with outsiders. The passes in the north and southwest mountains, the significant Palaghat gap in the western side and the gap between Anaimalai and Kolli hills are used by the people who wanted to settle in this region and to have trade transaction on its forest and other natural resources. The early immigrants, the gatherers, and hunters are said to have migrated from central Asia. There were downward movements from Deccan plateau from where certain nomadic pastoral communities migrated to this region possibly through the mountain passes of north and southwest side and found this place as a centre of resource for their cattle. During medieval times, there was an upward movement from plain region of Tamilakam, when a large number of peasants, traders and artisans extended their institutions and made use of it as a nodal point for all their activities. Moreover, it is located in such a strategic place that the caravan traders had to pass through this region to reach northern India as well as to have links with Central Asia and to Peninsular India to find further linkages with east and Southeast Asia. The role of Palghat gap on the western side is more remarkable in the history of Kongu. It connected this region directly with the western coast. By using the Palghat gap the early Roman traders were able to move up to southern parts of south India. The region therefore had been a place of continual influx of diverse people with different purposes and motives. At present, several cultural and social groups with multiplied caste entity inhabit Kongu. The social formation and cultural distinction of this region is not a recent phenomenon, but its origin goes back to the prehistoric period.

The remains of Neolithic culture are the earliest evidences to study the prehistory of Kongu. Painstaking effort of some archaeologists have brought out the remains of neolithic culture, which includes slick stones, celts, etc.¹⁰ It helps us to deduce a little knowledge of neolithic culture and human adaptation of Neolithic people. It is a general assumption that the neolithic culture of Peninsular India is followed by megalithic culture.¹¹ However, there is difference of opinion upon whether it is a distinctly unique culture or simply a burial method practiced by the Chalcolithic people. Whatever may be the argument, the magalithism, mainly constructed from a specific category of burial styles and method, exhibits inimitable customs and traditions, quite distinguishable from

¹⁰ Robert Bruce Foote, *Foot collection: Note on their Age and Distribution*, Government press, Madras, 1916, pp.57-69.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.25.

the traits of other culture. In recent years, efforts have been initiated to identify its particular features by excavating some megalithic human settlements.

Megalithic culture in Kongu is not only more visible and widely distributed, but also an advanced culture in terms of technology than those that preceded it. The material remains unearthed from the burial and habitation sites are the primary sources that help in studying the contemporary cultural pattern. The burial complex, popularly known as *pandukkal* complex, are of different kinds ranging from urn to cist burials. They have been found almost throughout the region irrespective of hills, plateau, plain and forest areas. However, the graveyards were mostly located in high elevated areas where the materials for megalithic burial architecture were easily available. A number of burials within a *pandukkal* complex vary from one to a few dozens. Erecting a single large stone, called *menhir* and encircling the surface with stones are general indicators that mark the location of exact burial sites. The urn and cist burials are more common. In case of urn burial, the dead person was placed in a large pot in sitting posture and buried in a pit. Cist is a chamber constructed by using stone slabs in a pit.¹² After placing the dead in the chamber, the pit was filled with earth. *Panduvakuzhi* is common name, which means urn burials particularly in Pollachi region. The stone circle on the surface of burial site is identified as *kurumbar* rings. These terms 'pandava' and *kurumbar* refer to early pastoral people of Kongu. Apart from skeletal remains, the megalithic findings can be grouped into three categories viz., pots, tools and copper, bronze and iron objects. In case of urn burial, pots in different shapes and size were placed around the large urns. The urns themselves are thick, coarse, unpolished and large pots. All of them have a rolled rim, without any decoration on the surface. In most cases, both in urn and cist burials, the pots of different styles, oval to globular, have been placed either in the posture of mouth downward or horizontal position. Therefore, it is suggested that they are not intended to contain anything.¹³ The potteries found in cists are polished and made of Black and Red Ware and Red Ware. Their shape includes bowls, dishes, and tall lids. The pottery was deposited directly on the floor near the side of cist in the earth filling in successive layers. Rarely some pots are placed upright and covered with lids. Some four-legged amphore from Mangalam is said to have contained paddy.¹⁴ There

¹² K.Rajan, *Archaeology of Tamilnadu (Kongu Country)*, Books India Publishing Co, Delhi, 2000, p.32.

¹³ Lekshnic Lawrence, *South Indian Megalithic Burials: The pandukkal complex*, Wiesbaden, 1974, p.91.

¹⁴ *ibid*, p.93.

are also ceramic objects of jars, cups, ring stands, carinated pots and funnel-shaped lids that have been reported from Salem.¹⁵ Next to dagger tweezers, axe, triangular knife, spear-point, iron knives, and spear heads form another set of grave findings. The bangles, sea-shell necklace, clay beads, barrel-shaped, red carnelian beads with white zig-zag etchings fall into the category of ornaments. The differentiation in the social organization is exemplified in burial methods and objects that vary from one to another perhaps indicating the social status of the dead person. The available iron and copper objects and pottery indicate the existence of specialized craftsmen. In other parts of south India, the megalithic ritual pottery usually contained paddy like food grains, whereas it is a rare occurrence in Kongu. So, that it can be understood that the agriculture was in its primitive stage. On the other hand, a large number of tolls can be taken as an evidence for the prevalence of hunting gathering social organization. To construct such a huge stone cist chambers, it definitely would have extorted a huge collective enterprise which is suggestive of cooperation among the people and the use of kinsmen as laborers. K.Rajan (who led the excavation at Kodumanal) opines that during the initial stage the megalithic people were cattle raisers and probably practiced rudimentary agriculture. But towards the end of the first millennium BCE, they became 'sedentary people and a clan based society emerged, exploitation of minerals and ores culminated, industrial activities intensified, specialized craftsmanship developed, script developed or the earlier one got modified, trade routes were constructed in the potential agricultural and mineral zones, various religions developed and literature proliferated'.¹⁶ It is certainly true that there is an evidence for all these developments, but their prevalence encompassing the whole region of Tamilakam needs a scientific understanding.

The grave goods that were unearthed can be divided into three categories. The first category incorporates the potteries of Red and Black ware, Black Polished ware, Red Polished Ware and Russet Coated Painted Ware in different kinds which include bowls, dishes, tall lids, jars, cups, ring stands, carinated pots and funnel-shaped lids, etc. The second one includes copper, bronze and iron objects like iron dagger, swords, javelin, bronze bowl, axe, triangular knife, spear-point, iron knives, and spear heads, etc. And finally in the third, we put ornaments like bangles, sea-shell necklace, rings of gold,

¹⁵ *ibid*, p.97.

¹⁶ K.Rajan, 'Recent Advances in Early Historic Archaeology of Tamil Nadu', in Rajagopal (ed) *kaveri*, 2001, P.232.

iron and copper, clay beads, barrel shaped, red carnelian beads with white zig-zag etchings, etc. Many cairn-circles in the foothill of the Western Ghats along of the Bhavani valley in the north and Pollachi area in the south were excavated by William Fraser in 1861.¹⁷ The burial sites contained iron objects, pottery of different shapes and sizes ranging from the big urns to small pots painted with wavy or parallel lines. M.J.Walhouse around Perundurai, Coimbatore, Pollachi and adjoining areas excavated different varieties of cists, some of them having multiple chambers. Walhouse also found seashells at Nallampatti grave. In Nattukalpalayam excavations (by Walhouse), different types of potteries, to name few of them, legged jars, conical bowls, dishes, basins, rim-stands, lids, globular pots, etc were found. The Iron implements from Nattukalpalayam grave goods include axe-blades, sickles, arrowheads, knife-blades, spearheads and some kind of tweezers.¹⁸ Similarly, Sandord's excavation in various parts of Coimbatore regions brought out potteries of Black-and-Red ware, Red ware, and Black ware.¹⁹ They include a fine four-legged jar, bowls, conical vessels with pointed base, concave neck and beaded rim, globular bodies narrow mouthed pots, large sized urns, lids and ring-stands. The Kodumanal excavation by Y. Subbarayalu and then by K.Rajan is an important milestone in understanding the megalithism of South India.²⁰ Here the megalithic habitation-cum-burial site was taken into systematic exploration and two material bases were identified. It is concluded that the first phase (2nd century BCE – 2nd century CE) must have been inhabited by mostly artisans working on semi-precious stones especially local crystal. The second phase, dated between the 2nd to 4th centuries CE, illustrates evidences for active iron working and enhanced agricultural activity. Citing the excavation at Kodumanal megalithic site, R. Champakalakshmi, says, 'the site has rich potential for studying the transitional stage from proto-history to the early history of the region'.²¹ Apart from these general grave goods, the finding of large number of gold and silver coins (Roman) deserves special mention. The greatest numbers of Roman coins found in India, mainly in hoards, come from places along this route. A major discovery was made in 1889 when a pot containing many coins, of

¹⁷ William Fraser, 'Antiquities in the Coimbatore District,' *Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, vol.22, 1861, pp.122-119.

¹⁸ M.J.Walhouse, 'Notes on the Megalithic Monuments in the Coimbatore District', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol.7, 1875, pp.17-34.

¹⁹ J.R.Sandford, 'Notes on the Recent Opening of some Preshistoric Burials in the Coimbatore District, Madras Presidency', *Journal of the Anthropological Society*, Bombay, vol.3, 1901, pp.461-471.

²⁰ Y.Subbarayalu and K.Rajan, 'Kodumanal Excavation', an unpublished report.

²¹ R.Champakalakshmi, *Trade Ideology and Urbanization in South India 300 BC to AD 1300*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1996, p.64.

Augustus and Tiberius was unearthed near Pollachi region. One of the Sular graves contained punch marked coin struck at Eran.²² Similarly, a remarkable bilingual silver coin written in Prakrit and Greek languages has been collected from Kambaiyanallur in Dharmapuri district.

The prehistory based on archaeological excavations is followed by the early history based specifically in the textual forms of literature and epigraphy. The early history of Kongu is constructed out of the references found in the early Tamil classical literature. Classical age in south India also includes the latter part of megalithic culture. Therefore, a correlative analysis of these two cultures would help us to characterize its contemporary socio-cultural pattern. The diffusion of Iron and Black, and Red Ware technology can probably be understood with various human settlements in Kongu. *Vedar irular*, *kurumbar*, *eyinar*, *maravar*, *goyar* and *kongar*, to whom we find numerous literary reference, were different social groups associated with classical age of Kongu. Among them, the *vedar* (hunters), *irular* (dark-skinned hunters), *eyinar* (another hunter group) and *kurumbar* (cattle-grazer) are categorized as early migrants and the rest were latter migrants. These segmented nomadic people gradually settled in different parts of Kongu, mostly among the forest and mountainous regions. In the course of time, they began to demarcate their territory and that led to the foundation of several chiefdoms within the region. The political formation was largely based on strong kinship ties. Clan based leadership was required to have the ability to lead the kinsmen at the time of hunting and plundering. At times, the warlike nature of Kongu chiefs attracted the neighbouring rulers who often sought their help to strengthen their army.²³ These chieftains emerged from various parts of Kongu and were frequently engaged in war with one another. Gift making was considered as a major factor determining the status of the chiefs. Depending on the wealth of the chiefs, the reward varied from a meal to gold. Social hierarchy received little attention and generally, the differentiation was only between chiefs and other kinsmen. Even the graves provide clear indication of the warlike activities of these hunters cum pastoral social groups. Their specialized skills in hunting and their exploits in plundering are received with much acclaim in several classical poems. Gradually they would have started shifting cultivation in some region where they were able to get their fields irrigated. The resources accumulated through hunting, plunder and trade on natural products were controlled and redistributed by these

²² C. Beck, 'Note on Sundry Asiatic Bead, *Man*, vol.30, no.134, 1930, pp.166-182.

²³ Jayakumar, 'Kodumanal Excavation' in Rajagopal (ed) *kaveri*, 2001, P.149.

chiefs. Presumably, the larger part went to the chief. Chiefs were highly respected and might have been worshipped after their demise. There were gradual change in attitudes of these early inhabitants towards the 5th century CE and that opens into another cultural setting of this region.

The hunter cum pastoral society now had taken shift to pastoral cum cultivators during the 6th century CE. The cattle breeding and shifting cultivation became the dominant means of livelihood. Some smaller chiefdoms merged into one another. Then there emerged some larger chiefdom with considerable territorial extension. Herostones of various forms such as *nadukal*, *pandikal*, *pullikutikal*, *veerakal*, etc., are the main sources to study this period. Most of them found in the northeastern part of Kongu are specifically eulogies about death of heroes because of various reasons such as martyrdom in battlefield, skirmishes, while engaging in deer hunting and cattle lifting and other similar exploits. These hero stones also frequently mention the name of the heroes and their chiefs, his genealogy and place of the event. Some of these hero stones have been dated with regnal years of neighboring regions that began to establish their sovereignty over the chiefs of Kongu. However there is no indication of feudal or overlord relationship. The earlier nomadic life would have brought them into contact with outsiders, particularly peasants. The range of contact could have further widened with the exchange in dairy and other natural products. Nevertheless, their occupation was not confined to cattle breeding. Hunting was marginally practiced and there was a notable development in shifting cultivation. Amaravati, Bhavani, and Noyyal area were developed as an agrarian unit. But agriculture and agrarian activities were yet to reach its privileged position. Therefore, even with the presence of agriculture, the society was predominantly pastoral. Towards the end of the 9th century, Kongu was getting ready to face yet another cultural diffusion with the advent of Jain and Buddhist missionaries, who were profoundly interested in trading activities, spread of Bhakti ideology, influx of peasants who were at that time in search of cultivable land and finally the effort of chiefs to bring whole Kongu under one sovereignty.

Peasants and traders, some of whom were new immigrants or aboriginal hunters and pastoralist who modified their livelihood, provided yet another dimension to the cultural evolution of Kongu. This phase witnessed the diffusion of plain culture, intensification of trader's and merchant's activities, temple oriented urbanization, and most importantly the emergence of full-fledged state system in Kongu. The previous short herostones were now replaced by long stone inscriptions and copper plates. These are most reliable sources for our study and are found throughout the region. The subject matter of these inscriptions is religious endowment in various forms such as land, livestock, gold, money, etc. Local influential persons like chiefs, dominant agriculturalists, merchants, even artisans and lay people made most these grants. This information found in the inscription bears the stamp of a politicized economy and society. Now, the Kongu rulers were identified as kings and not merely a chief as referred to in previous sources. The State's control over its subjects is apparent. Several taxes, mentioned in these inscriptions illustrate an effective taxation arrangement. The whole region was divided into small *nadu* territories, then territories into *grama* villages. Local assemblies like *sabha*, *nadu*, *nagaram*, *ur*, etc, have been depicted as decision making bodies at the local level. These assemblies specifically looked after irrigation arrangements, temple management, settling social disputes, etc. Temples played a vital role in socioeconomic formation. Meeting of the local bodies were held in the temple. In the course of time, traders, artisans, temple servants, Brahmans, etc. settled around the temple. Thus, it became an urban centre and marketing place. Surplus in agrarian products, development in craft technology, increasing needs of peasants and brahmana contributed to the intensification of trading activities. In brief, the society and economy of Kongu during phase typified all characteristics what is called state society.

The sudden influx of various social groups, changes in traditional life style, specialization in craft production, development in technology, the important role of peasants, traders and artisan in society, etc., propelled the Kongu society into a complex one, which marks the next phase. Towards the 14th century CE, there was a profound multiplication of numerous caste groups. Some of them, who specialized in certain crafts that were inevitable to the society, began to claim higher status and privilege in society, which in turn led to social conflicts and tension. Several such social clashes have been mentioned in contemporary sources. The social complexity became intense when it was divided into two divisions viz., *idangai* and *valangai*, Tamil words for left

and right hands. It is said that there was a prolonged struggle between these two sections. In such conflicts, it is reported that villages were burnt, temples were demolished and people were burnt to death. But on the other hand, Kongu achieved economic prosperity during the phase. It became one of the nodal trade centers in India. The surplus in agricultural produce made the region affluent and wealthy.

Towards the end of medieval period and during the modern age, Kongu constantly underwent several socio-cultural changes. Different social groups from various parts of south India began to settle in this region, resulting in emergence of a sort of composite social formation. The physical and cultural scenario of present Kongu is indeed an outcome of the prolonged relation with its inhabitants. During the early days the forest and pasture lands provided home for hunters and pastoral people, the early settlers of this region. In course of time the pasture lands, in certain cases forest areas as well, were converted to agrarian fields that witnessed the growth of agrarian institution in Kongu. The richness in natural products such as honey, timber, precious stones, etc initiated the process of urbanization, which latter intensified with surplus in agricultural products. The recent construction of dams has further developed the agricultural sector. At present Kongu is one of the best revenue yielding areas of Tamil Nadu. Moreover, development in cotton industries has brought Coimbatore region the name 'Manchester of South India', despite changes in large-scale, still one can find certain continuity in socio-cultural and economic practice of present day Kongu people. We get reference for weaving right at present. Since early days, the people of Kongu are interested in trading activities, which still continues. As mentioned the Kangayam region breeds good variety of cattle, for which Kongu is known from the early days. The local Tamil dialect spoken over Kongu is slightly different from other parts of Tamil Nadu, giving a regional variation. Still there are various tribes, probably the decedents of aboriginal people living in certain hilly areas, following rectilinearly socio-cultural and religious practices.

At present Kongu is inhabited by people belonging to various religions, castes and language groups. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and Jains are major religious groups living in different parts of the region. The castes found in the regions include Brahmins, *vellalars*, *vanniyar*, *agamudaiyars*, *vaniyars*, *kammalars*, *kaikolars*, *lingayats*, *besthas*, *kavarais*, *gollas*, *kammas*, *kapus or reddis*, *okkiliyars*, *devangas*, *idaiyars*, *kuravers*, *madigas*, *chakkiliars*, *holeyas*, *malas*, *valluvans*, *paraiyars*, *dobaras*,

lambadikal, *irular*, etc. Minor castes are generally from Telugu and Kannada lingual background. Among these, the *vellalar*, known as *kongu vellalar*, are dominant both numerically and economically.

Chapter-III

Early Settlers and Emergence of Chiefdoms (up to 5th CE)

The chapter begins with an intermediate stage in the process of social evolution and offers an examination of the settlement of early tribes as well as the consequent political formation in Kongu. First, it is necessary to introduce the concept of 'chiefdom'. There is no coherent theoretical synthesis about the origin and nature of chiefdoms. Various definitions given by ethnologist and archaeologist in this regard contradict each other. Yet, some common features can be identified. Chiefdom can be used to describe a society which is neither entirely tribal nor a full-fledged state, but shows some sort of socio-political centralization. The process of chiefdom formation begins with the attempt to control the local autonomy over production. It is a crucial stage in the evolution since it marks the origin of a politico-society.¹ In brief, when individual tribal leaders try to control the kin groups and in the process be linked with the activity of pooling and redistribution of the surplus, and ultimately when that activity tends to become hereditary, the chiefdom arises.

Chiefs are said to have performed some sort of a managerial role and the central decision making on important issues rested in their hands. They could hold authority over rituals and ceremonies, warfare, long distance trade, foreign affairs, etc. Generally, a chief follows different strategies to uphold his leadership and enhance his status within and outside the chiefly principality.² According to Steponaities, there are ten political strategies that are adopted to gain political power: 1) Giving, feasting and presentations, 2) Improving the infrastructure of subsistence production, 3) Encouraging circumscription, 4) Applying force, 5) Forging external ties, 6) Expanding dependant population, 7) Seizing control of existing principle of legitimacy (supernatural and natural) 8) Creating or appropriating new principle of legitimacy, 9) Seizing control of internal wealth production and distribution and 10) Seizing control of external wealth procurement.

1. Henry T Wright, 'Recent Research on the Origin of the State', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol.6, 1977, p.382. For related arguments see, T.K.Earle, 'A Reappraisal of Redistribution: Complex Hawaiian Chiefdoms' in T.K.Earle and J.E.Eriscon (eds), *Exchange System in Prehistory*, New York, 1977, pp213-29.

² It has been quoted and explained in Timothy Earle, 'The Evolution of Chiefdom', *Current Anthropology*, vol.30, no.1, 1998, pp.84-88.

Warfare and conquest are two important features of chiefdom.³ Claiming the genealogical proximity with a common ancestor, usually one from out of the chiefdom, or with a mythological personality is another way to acquire authority and higher status. Use of highly prestigious items gained, particularly through exchange was associated with chief and his elite group. By controlling the long distance trade and flow of prestigious goods to local community and having relation with other chiefly elites, the chiefs were able to gain high status. Thus, the social distance between the chiefs and other tribesmen was gradually widened. Despite a consistent attempt to establish control over internal wealth production and external procurement, both production and procurement of certain basic resources remains in the hands of people.⁴ Thus, the local communities could still hold autonomy over basic subsistence resources without economically depending on any higher status individual or elite group. On the other hand, the local communities are economically interdependent with each other and there is internal exchange among them in basic resources.

1. Note on sources

In examining chiefdom in the context of the Kongu region, we draw information from a range of sources that can be broadly classified into two categories, viz., archaeological findings and classical Tamil literature. Excavation reports on megalithic burials and habitation remains bring a great degree of knowledge to the early settlers of Kongu and their relations. The nature and time span of the highly visible megalithic culture is overlapping with Red and Black Ware culture, Iron culture, and Tamil heroic culture. The Megalithic burial complexes are in different kinds ranging from urn to cist burials. They have been found almost throughout the region. They are locally identified by different names such as *pandu kuli*, *padu kuli*, *paddi kuli*, *pandu samadhi*, *pandavar veedu*, *vali kudi*, *kurangupparai*, *vedar kudi*, *kurumbar kudi*, *raksasa veedu*, etc. Number of burials within a burial complex varies from single to a few dozens.⁵ Altogether three kinds of burial remains have been unearthed. Firstly, the potteries of Red and Black Ware, Black Polished ware, Red Polished Ware and Russet Coated

³ Carneiro, Robert, 'A Theory of the Origin of the State', *Science, New Series*, vol-169, no.3947, 1970, pp. 733-39.

⁴ It has been cited from Morton H Fried, *The Evolution of Political society- An Essay in Political Anthropology*, Random House, New York, 1967 in Winifred Crcamer & Jonathan Hass, 'Tribe Versus Chiefdom in Lower Central America', *Amerian Antiquity*, vol.50, no.4, 1985, pp 738-54.

⁵ Leshnik, Lawrence, *South Indian Megalithic Burials: The Pandukal Complex*, Wiesbaden 1974, p.91.

Painted Ware in different kinds which include bowls, dishes, tall lids, jars, cups, ring stands, carinated pots and funnel-shaped lids, etc. Secondly, copper, bronze and iron objects like iron dagger, swords, javelin, bronze bowl, axe, triangular knife, spear-point, iron knives, and spear heads, etc. And finally, ornaments like bangles, sea-shell necklace, rings of gold, iron and copper, clay beads, barrel shaped, red carnelian beads with white zig-zag etchings, etc.

The Tamil potsherd graffiti marks, Brahmi labels, and coins bring another sort of archaeological knowledge to understand the early socio-political formation. So far, more than hundred signs in different medium such as metal, stone and pottery have been identified. For example, graffiti marks have been noticed on rings, bangles, pots and coins at Karur, the south-eastern part of Kongu. It is a general assumption that the graffiti marks precede Tamil Brahmi scripts.⁶ However, there is no unanimous opinion in accepting the graffiti marks as primitive form of Tamil Brahmi, rather it has been perceived as it developed out of the Brahmi script as a local adaptation due to the expansion of Mauryan Empire, in the wake of the Jain and Buddhist expansion, growing trade exchange, etc.⁷

The early Tamil Brahmi labels record the endowments made to Buddhist and Jaina monks by local individuals, presumably merchants. The location of these labels along the caravan route and the reference to some specialist merchant's name like *pon-vanikan*, *aruvai-vanikan*, *kolu-vanikan*, *uppu-vanikan*, etc., support the argument about merchants' connection with Brahmi labels.⁸ It is significant that compared to other regions of Tamilakam, the Kongu region yields a highest number of Brahmi inscriptions. It is probably due to the fact that the trade route that connected the peninsular India passed across the region. Gold coins of Roman and punch marked coins of the Ceras and the Pandiyas are indicators of a reasonably developed traders' network. Pollachi, Karur, Kalayamuttur, Coimbatore, etc., are some important places where large-scale herds of Roman gold coins have been unearthed.⁹ Apart from gold coins we also find a small number of local coins, issued by the Cera and the Pandiya rulers, which

⁶ Rajan Gurukkal, 'Writing and its Uses in the Ancient Tamil Country', *Studies in History*, 1996, p.68

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ K.Rajan, 'Recent Advances in Early Historic Archaeology of Tamil Nadu' in Rajagopal (ed), *Kaveri, Studies on Epigraphy, Archaeology and History*, Panpattu Veliyittakam, Chennai, 2001, p.231.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.237.

were made of lead, silver and copper.¹⁰ As in the case of Brahmi labels, the coins had also been found on important trade routes and trade centres. The Roman coins were inscribed with the names of rulers, whereas the locally issued ones had symbols like fish, bow and arrow.

In spite of different categories of archaeological sources, the knowledge of the past that can be deduced from them is limited to a small section of contemporary society. The prevalence of coins and Brahmi labels exclusively demonstrates mercantile activities. Still it is widely believed that the coins were used as valuable or ornaments rather than their real pecuniary sense.¹¹ Though the primitive Tamil script appeared to be in use, it was understandably yet to reach the common folk. Yet, it is more doubtful that the chief and the *panans*, who were masters in making oral composition, knew the art of writing and reading. Nevertheless, the archaeological sources are highly helpful if we use them for a corroborative study with classical Tamil literature, which are believed to have a bardic origin. The actual composition of these early texts has been dated approximately in between the 3rd century BCE to 3-5 CE. The growth of the classical Tamil literature has a long history with various stages like 1) actual composition (creative act), 2) oral transmission, 3) compilation of anthologies, 4) editing and codification, 5) composition of commentaries, 6) modern edition.¹² These expressive texts were composed by poets of both sexes who belonged to different communities that varied from princes to potter. The *ettutokai* and *pattupattu*, two great and popular anthologies, speak of different aspects of the contemporary culture. The *paripadal* and the *kalittokai* among the eight collections of *ettutokai* are identified as of latter additions.¹³ The *ainkurunuru* (the five hundred short poems) and *kuruntokai* (The anthology of short poems), *Narrinai* (the anthology of poems about the good *tinai*s), *patirruppattu* (the ten tens), *akananuru* (the four hundred about *Akam*) and *purananuru* (the four hundred about *puram*) occupy the first six respective places in the chronological order of the collections. Likewise *tirumurukarrupatai* in *Pattupattu* is considered as a later work, the rest of *pattupattu* collections can be arranged according to the date of their compilation which is as follows: 1) *Porunarrupatai*, 2)

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Rajan Gurukkal, 'Forms of Production and Forces of Change in Ancient Tamil Society', *Studies in History*, vol.5, no.2, 1989, p.165.

¹² Kamil V. Zvelebil, *The Smile of Murgan, On Tamil Literature of South India*, Leiden, E.J.Brill, 1973, p.24.

¹³ *ibid*, p.29.

Perumpanarruppatai, 3) *Pattinapplai*, 4) *Kurincippattu*, 5) *Malaiapatukatam*, 6) *Netunalvatai*, 7) *Maturaikkanci*, 8) *Mullaippattu*, 9) *Cirupanarruppatai*. The theme, subject and contents of these collection can be divided into two broad categories viz., *akam* and *puram*, poetry of love and poetry of heroism respectively.

For the present discussion, we intend to keep the literary sources at the central and to use the other references to crosscheck its contents. Most of the literary references used in this chapter have been taken from *ettutokai* collections, *purananuru*, *akananuru*, *patirru pattu* and *narrinai* in particular. Texts of *pattupatu* such as *cirupanrrupadai* and *maduraikkanni* are also referred to wherever we come across references with regard to Kongu and its people. The chart at the end of this chapter shows the chronological order of the selected songs, the name of the texts, subject matters, etc. The songs have been singled out: 1) on the basis of the region or locality that the poems speak of (ex. *kudirai malai*, *kolli malai*, *parampu malai*, etc), 2) the songs that refer the chiefs of Kongu region (Ori, Adiyaman, etc), and 3) based on the references related to the social groups that are specific to the region (*kongar*, *kosar*, *kurumabar*, etc).

2. Early Tribes

The best starting point to identify the early settlers of the region would be to examine the archaeological clues. Though one may find traces of human habitation in Kongu right from the beginning of the neolithic period, substantial indications are enough to construct the nature of society and identify the social groups that can be gathered mainly from megalithic remains. Who were the megalithic people? Which tribe did they belong to? Where had they come from? We do not have any direct clues in this regard, but the *kurumbar* would have been one of the tribes, which practiced megalithic burial rituals. The stone circle that marks the megalithic burial complex is identified by the name of *kurumbar* ring, leaving the word *kurumbar* as indicator¹⁴. Archaeologists like Walhouse and Walter Elliott are of the opinion that the early *kurumbar* came to India as nomadic invader from Central Asia,¹⁵ but this assumption has not yet been factually established. It is also considered that the *kurumbar* of the latter period were identified with different names and they were forced to move to the hilly area. We have a good number of literary evidences referring to the *kurumbar* tribe. *Purananuru* speaks

¹⁴ Leshnik, Lawrence, *South Indian Megalithic Burials,- The Pandukal Complex* op.cit., p.91.

¹⁵ Ibid.

of the *kurumbar* country filled with forts (Chart-1, No. 207) and they drank toddy to their hearts content (Chart-1, Nos. 80, 62). Still, it is said that the descendents of *kurumbar* tribes inhabited certain interior hilly region and they are known for their mischievous or magical activities.¹⁶ *Kurumbar* is the only tribe, which can be discussed in light of both archaeological as well as literary evidences. Though Walhouse tries to ascribe the origin of *kurumbar* to megalithic burials, it would be wrong to consider the *kurumbar* as sole habitant of megalithic culture. In addition to *kurumbar*, in the classical literature we find plenty of other tribes attached to the Kongu region. The prominent among them are *vedar*, *eyinar*, *kuravar*, *kongar*, *kocar*, *maravar* and *kanvar*.

According to Arokiaswamy, *vedar* and *eynar* can be considered contemporary to *kurumbar* (Chart-1, Nos. 80, 62).¹⁷ The *vedar*, the hunters and warriors, had their settlements throughout south India. They specially preferred the forest and hilly areas since they offered stuffs for the daily subsistence. The present *vettuvur* tribe perhaps owes its origin from *vedar*. However, the *vettuvus* now consider themselves superior to the *vedar*. The *vedar*'s art of hunting is highly praised in *nedunalvadai*. They drank, danced, and worshiped the goddess Korravai, according to *purananuru*.

The age of *kurumbar*, *vedar* and *eyinar* marked the period of early social groups. Though the descendants of these tribes managed to survive in the later days, they had to constantly engage in tribal wars with new immigrants like *kosar*, *kongar* and *maravar*. They might have possessed an advanced method of hunting, knew the art of exploiting animal and forest resources, and had sufficient knowledge in horticulture or shifting cultivation. Perhaps they could have used horses. In the course of time, these later groups of hunter-herders origins might have taken the position of warrior, plunderers and occasional shifting cultivators.

Among these later tribes, the *kongar* were known for their bravery in the tribal warfare and cattle wealth. There is still an assumption that the region might have taken its name from the early tribe.¹⁸ They were pastoral people who had been on constant movement in search of pastureland for their cattle.¹⁹ Thus, the traces of early *kongar* are found not only in the Kongu region but also in the southern parts of Karnataka and

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Arokiyasamy, *The Kongu Country*, University of Madras, Madras, 1956, p.39.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Durai Ramaswamy, *The Surnames of Cankam Age, Literary and Tribes*, University of Madras, Madras, 1968, p.23.

Kerala regions, which adjoin the Kongu. However, they spent considerable time in Kongu and posed a great deal of threat to other chiefs of south India. The Ceras and the Pandiyas were constantly engaged in a battle in order to move them out of the region. We understand in light of *akananuru* that a Pandiya chief, Pacumpon Pandiyan, after the defeat of his ally, Atikan by *kongar* made a successful expedition against them that resulted in their elimination from their territory (Chart-1, No.109). Pasumpon celebrated his victory against the *kongar* with sweet music at Madurai (Chart-1, No.109). The Cera ruler Illancherrai Irumporai is being prized as '*kongar ko*' (the king of *kongar*) (Chart-1, No.88), it indicates the Cera influence over the *kongar*. Ay, one of the powerful chieftains of early Tamilakam, also happened to meet the *kongar* at the battle field (Chart-1, No.36). While describing about the Ay expedition, a *purananuru* poem reads 'if the big elephants are numbered, they are more than the spears displayed on that day when the *kongar* were driven to the western seas' (Chart-1, No.36). Their cattle wealth has been alluded in *pattirrupattu*. It describes that the *kongar* had a territory of their own called the *kongarnadu*, which suffered from intense scarcity of water. For the sake of their cattle, they had to dig deep by cutting hard-bound-rocks with iron pick-axe till the few dribblets of water ooze out. This country of the *kongar*, known for their cattle, was captured by the frightful army of Cera (Chart-1, No.189). Similarly, another poem in the same text reads as 'in his (Perun Ceral Irumporai) army I see many elephants moving and spreading like the cows of the *kongar* of dark weapons' (Chart-1, No.1). Yet, another interesting account about the *kongar* is found in *akananuru*. It describes the dance of *ulli vilavu* performed by the *kongar*. Having a bell tied over their waist, the *kongar* danced along the streets causing a great deal of noise (Chart-1, No.122).

The phrases such as *kongilam kosar*, *muthu kosar*, *nan-moli kosar*, etc., help to study the *kosar* settlements in the Kongu region (Chart-1, Nos. 60, 210). They are said to have migrated from the Tulu country of Cera's territory (Chart-1, No. 81). The modern name of Coimbatore is considered to have been derived from the *kosar* tribe. From available references, it is quite clear that they had a settled life for a considerable period in Kongu. "The *kosar* of the four villages who appeared in the common place by the old banyan tree", informs *kuruntokai* (Chart-1, No. 208). According to *akananuru* the fine country of the *kosar* of many spears was rich with the fertile fields of Neydal flowers with tender honey (Chart-1, No. 209). "The common meeting ground under the rare branches of the old and full grown banyan tree of the *kosar* of the adorned chariots',

describes *akananuru* (Chart-1, No. 210). The many young *kosar*, of unfailing spears, who under the leadership of Maran the great, defeat in upright battle' and Tulu country of the *kosar* which is rich with gold jewels are other references in *akananuru* with regard to the *kosar* (Chart-1, No. 81). However, it can be argued that the *kosar* tribe was not confined to any particular region. We draw references with regard to the *kosar* settlement in different parts southern Kerala and Karnataka and western Tamil Nadu.²⁰ Being a brave warriors group, they might have kept themselves engaged in movements. In several occasions, they have assisted the *ventar* chiefs by being part of their troops.

Kosar were those, who drove away the cruel Nannan who murdered an innocent girl. They were known for their honest and truthfulness (Chart-1, Nos. 107, 213, 212, 211). They drank toddy freely and cherished in having wound on their chest in warfare. They happened to fight with one Polamput Killi who destroyed their army and captured their land. The chariots of *kosar* were famous for their speed. They ran as swift as wind.

In one instance, the *kosar* were very cruel to pass a judgment to gouge out the eyes of Anni Minjili's father for his negligence in harvesting the *varaku* crop. Anni Minjili was angry and restless. She sought the help of Titiyan to punish them and consequently Titiyan defeated the *kosar* (Chart-1, No. 111). Apart from these references, we also find the classical literature addressing the *kosar* by different phrases like *meymali perumpu semmar kosar*, *vaduvuday mukather*, *kadunka kosar*, *kappukkai nirutha palver kosar*, *onru moli kosar*, *valankelu kosar*, *pallilank kosar*, *punaither kosar*, *urmuthu kosar*, etc., (Chart-1, Nos. 207, 9, 208, 64, 210, 251, 212).

The *malavar* is yet another warrior tribe whose association with the Kongu region can be perceptibly seen in the classical Tamil literature. Adiyaman of Tagadur and Ori of Kollimali, the chiefs of the Kongu region during classical period, have been titled respectively as '*malavar perumagan*' and *malavar perumagan ma vil ori* (Chart-1, Nos. 7, 10). The *malavar* had a settled life with the rule of the above said chiefs, they were sometime highway robbers and known for their cattle raid (Chart-1, Nos. 83, 126, 368, etc).

The *kanvar*, *vedar*, and *kuravar*, etc., are referred as occupying some hills track of Kongu, the region famous for its forest and hill. We find *narrinai* saying '*vedar* of the *kolli malai*' and *kuravar* of the *kolli nilam* (Chart-1, Nos. 142, 143). Similarly in

²⁰ Durai Ramaswamy, *The Surnames of Cankam Age, Literary and Tribes*, op.cit., p.12.

one *purananuru* song, Ori is said to be the best among the *vettuvās* (Chart-1, No. 213). The *kanvar* is a generic term referring to the *vedar* and the *kuravar*, the people of forest and hill respectively.

3. Chiefs and their Territories

The names of chiefs who led the early social groups such as *kurumbar*, *kosar* and *kongar* are not traceable, but we have a number of references which attest their engagement in tribal fighting. We hear of *kongar*, *kosar* and *kurumbar* had to fight with the Cera, Pandiya and other chiefs. Presumably, these early social groups were semi-nomadic tribes and yet to be developed into a sort of political set up. The differentiation between the chief and other kinsmen is not clear, in fact, it was not required in such circumstances where the subsistence economy was primarily confined to hunting and herding.

Addressing Ilanceral Irumporai, the Cera ruler, as *konkar ko* in *patirruppattu* can be understood that he had tried to extend his supremacy over the *kongar*. The mention of 'kongar of dark weapons', spears of *kongar* and the expeditions against the *kongar* by the chiefs like Ay, Pacumpun Pandiyan, Celkelu Kuttuvan and Ilanceral Irumporai illustrate that they are equally strong enough to fight with these chiefs. Moreover, *narrinai* speaks that the Chola had to take the help of Palayan of Peye in order to bring the *kongar* under his control (Chart-1, No. 124). It seems the *kongar* postured a great threat to the neighboring chiefs. Due to their nature of moving, they were probably not able to settle down in certain territorial locality for a considerable period of time and might have remained as a wandering tribal group.

So is the case of *kosar* tribe. Most references with regard to *kosar* found in the literature speak about *kosar* for particular places Tulu Natu, Cellur Natu, Potiyil Natu and Nalur. Among them, the Nalur Nadu is identified with the Modern Namakkal, located in the southern part of Kongu region. It is still controversial to conclude that the *kosar* came from Tulu country to settle in Kongu. However, the references with regard to *kosar* of Tulu Country are numerous (Chart-1, Nos. 81, 102, etc). The *kosar* of Tulu country are said to have assembled under a banyan tree probably to take some decision on certain issues. It indicates a developed politico-society. Yet, the literatures do not specifically name any chiefs of *kosar*. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that a chiefdom level of political unification was yet to be evolved. The emergence of a particular

section as a ruler was not still the case. The possible social stratification was based on sex and age. The references such as *ilankosar* and *muthukosar* show the division of society into the elder and the younger.

Towards the beginning of the Christian era, these semi-nomadic social groups began to settle permanently in certain territorial location preferably in the hilly regions, which marked the emergence of chiefdoms in Kongu.. In the following pages, we intend to draw a synoptic sketch about these chiefs, their territories, their tribesmen and their relation or conflict with rulers along with the overall political development.

The phrase *malavar perumagan ori* explicates that Ori, one of the greatest chieftains who had high reputation for his bravery, belonged to *malavar* tribe. He is also sometime referred to as best among the *vettuv*s (Chart-1, No. 52) showing his connection to the *vettuva* family (probably the *malavar* could have been the sub clan of *vettuva*). His territory, the Kolli hill of high peak (Chart-1, No. 136), was famous for its toddy (Chart-1, No. 116), jack fruit trees and it had been the home of goddess, called *kolli pavai* (Chart-1, No. 143), Ori is described as a gallant as well as benevolent person (Chart-1, Nos. 52, 63), lover of music and a hunter of excellence (Chart-1, Nos. 63, 124). The strength of his archery is a bit exaggeratedly illustrated in one song of *purananuru* that reads 'the arrow released from his bow piercing through the elephant, made it fall down, the same arrow escaping from the body of the elephant killed the tiger with wide open mouth piercing through its body, the force was not exhausted, the arrow, escaping, pierced through the antelope of the hollow horns, making it fall down and roll. Still unabated, the arrow ran through the body of the hog of mortar-like head, hurling it down, finally the arrow got stuck upon the body of a great lizard (Chart-1, No. 52). Kari, another chief, took an expedition against Ori of Kolli Malai in favor of the Ceras (Chart-1, No. 107).

Adiyaman also known as Neduman Anji is one of the celebrated chieftains of the Sangam Age. A number of poems have been composed for him, glorifying his courage in warfare, generosity in gift making, etc. Fascinating nature of his territory, ancestors, horse, chariot, elephant, warriors, etc., also have reference. Phrases such as *adiyar koman anji* and *malavar perumakan* indicate his tribal origin to the *adiyar* and *malavar* families. Adiyaman ruled the hilly region around the Shervarayan ranges having Takadur, modern Darmapuri, as capital. We hear of Anji's expedition against various Kongu rulers and tribes like *kongar*. Almost all the songs composed on Anji emphasize

his bravery (Chart-1, No. 6). In *narrinai*, he is said to have had a 'cavalry consisting of swift horses and a force of tall and fast moving elephants' (Chart-1, No. 19). *Purananuru* gives a descriptive picture of annoyed Anji, it reads 'spear in the hand; victorious anklet on legs; sweat over the body; wound on the chest; unrestrained angry just like the elephant muster up his courage to have fight with a tiger; those, who annoyed him, can not get away and stay alive...' (Chart-1, No.18). Another poem talks of his generosity as follows "visit him one day; visit two days; many days with many people, you will receive the same warm welcome as that of the first day by Adiyaman of adorned elephants and attractive chariot. He may or may not delay in offering gifts, but no need to be anxious about gifts... my heart, it is just like rolled fodder in the mouth of an elephants, you will not miss it...(Chart-1, No. 19). On behalf of his side, Auvaiyar visited the court of Thondaiman for certain diplomatic concerns. Thondaiman took her to show his weaponry shed. After seeing them she composed a satiric poem, which reads 'here the weapons with delicately decorated wooden handle are in order, garlanded, oiled, whereas there (in Adiyaman place) they are seen to be always in the shed of iron smith occupying his small place after they got broken their tip on the account of ceaseless battle (Chart-1, No. 13). He successfully defeated seven chiefs in battle and controlled rebellion at Kovalur (Chart-1, No. 17). The growing power of Adiyaman might have alarmed the neighboring Cera rulers who had already begun to gear up against Adiyaman. Though, Adiyaman was able to get support from the Chola and Pandiya rulers, the victory went to the hands of the Cera. It is said that on the behalf of the Chera, Adiyaman had to undertake an expedition against Nannan. After a rigorous battle, Adiyaman was killed by Nannan and that was the end to his glorious regime.

Nannan of Konganam region of Mysore was contemporary of Adiyaman and Cheran Sel-Kelu Kuttuvan. His territory extended up to the major parts of Northern Kongu. He was a gallant warrior, an able commander (Chart-1, Nos. 86, 94) and possessed good cavalry and a force of elephants. He constantly fought to extend his territory, which in turn resulted in a number of bloody battles. It is often said that Nannan is a commander of Cera. But it would be a wrong assumption since we have many references that speak of prolonged hostility between the Ceras and Nannan. The ferocious fight between Ay Eyinan and Minjili, the commanders of the Cera and Nannan respectively, at a place called Pazhi gave splendid victory to Nannan (Chart-1, No. 102). As mentioned above, Kudavayil Keerathanar speaks about the defeat of Pazhayana

by Nannan and his confederates Ettai, Atti, Gangan, Katti and Punturai (Chart-1, No. 86). He had also defeated Pandiyan and Adiyaman and had fought with the *kosar* of Cellur (Chart-1, Nos. 105, 106). After the death of Nannan, his son Udiyan Ceral continued to rule under the sway of the Ceras. Unlike other chiefs of the classical period, Nannan's generosity and benefaction have not been much spoken in the literature.

4. Subsistence Economy

The nature of polity discussed so far is a product of a mixed subsistence economy dominated by cattle rearing. The *kurumbar*, *kosar* and the *kongar* were hunters-cum-pastoralists. They kept moving in search of grasslands and hunting stuffs. Therefore, they hardly got an opportunity to come together and settle in some specified territories. Initially, they could have bounded together in terms of clan without any political formation. This sort of socio-economic formation continued for a long period. However, towards end of the classical period the cattle rearing would have dominated entire subsistence activities, giving way for the sedentarized settlement and the evolution of politico-society. The settlement of *kuravar*, *vettuvār*, *maravar*, *malavar*, etc., would have further widened the existing options for subsistence with the addition of plunder and minimal agriculture. It is even quite clear that *tinai* concept, signifies various forms of ecology-based subsistence practices. Among the five physiographical divisions (*tinai*), the most part of the Kongu fall into *kurinji* (hilly backwoods), *mullai* (pastoral tract), and *palai* (parched zones) segments. The human adaptations as understood by the terms of *tinai* is also applicable here. The hunting-gathering social groups such as *kanvar*, *kuravar* and *vedar* of *kurunji tinai*, the *kalvar*, *eyinar* and *maravar* of *palai tinai*, and the pastoralist and shifting cultivators such as *ayar* and *idayar* of *mullai tinai* are being frequently referred to in the relevant poems.

But no subsistence method is specific to any social group. We hear about *kuravar* (hunters), *maravar* (warrior), etc., who undertook shifting cultivation and animal husbandry, similarly hunting by *ayar*, *maravar*, etc., and cattle lifting (plunder) by *kuravar* and *kanvar*. Likewise all social groups might have engaged in some sort of exchange following barter system. All male folk without occupational distinction became warriors and undertook some role in case of tribal warfare. For example, blacksmith made weaponries, carpenters manufactured chariots, *pulavar*, and *panar* regarded the war events, made some diplomatic suggestion to the chiefs, *panar* and

kuttar had their role too since the battles began and end with singing, dancing and beating drums.

Altogether five forms of livelihood can be deduced from the literature: 1) hunting and gathering, 2) herding (diary products and meat), 3) shifting cultivation, 4) commodity production (weaving, melting, pot making, carpentering, etc), 5) plunder and 6) living by gifted items. According to available evidences, elephants, pigs, deer, tiger, big lizard, and birds were the most frequent victims in hunting. The large number of iron tools unearthed during the archaeological excavation affirms the warrior and hunter hegemony during the classical age. Spear, arrow, daggers, bow, knives, etc., made of iron were manufactured mainly for this purpose. As referred, a *puranamuru* song speaks of Ay's single arrow slaughtered elephants, pigs, deer, tiger and big lizard. It also addresses him best among the *vettuvār* community. So hunting was undertaken not only for the sake of food, sometime, to have a fun, to experiment the heroic talent as well.

Toddy, honey, eatable fruits and roots were gathered. *Madhu* (it does also mean honey, toddy or any sort of liquor) was considered as an indicator of wealth. Sometime it is figured in the list of gifts given to *pulavar* and *panar*. Chiefs are repeatedly praised for having country, which is famous for its rich *madhu*. Special occasions, such as pleasurable movements, victory and success were celebrated with drinking *madhu*. If a chief shares *madhu* with his kinsmen or anyone, that would signify his respect for them, participation in their sufferings, and considers them on par with him. Edible forest fruits, roots, etc., could have occupied major part in daily foodstuffs.

Sheep, cattle and pig were herded for meat and dairy products. Almost all social groups practiced animal husbandry, while some had it as full time occupation. Due to seasonal changes, drought, etc., the cattle were to be taken to suitable place, which might have resulted in the transhumance (based on seasonal resources availability), leading to contact with peasants and traders. We see that in *kongars'* hometown, there was much scarcity of water, therefore they had to dig deeper to get water for their cattle. Presumably, the Kongu region would have been preferred by the early pastoralist like *kurumbar*, *kongar*, and *kosar* due to its suitability for herding. Their relation with their original land, i.e., Tulu country, which were well connected with trade centres of both inside and outside the country, would have helped them to develop some sort of primitive trade in dairy products and others. There are numerous references about the events related to cattle raiding and recapturing the raided cattle. However, it is difficult

to single out the reference particularly to the Kongu region. The chapter four discusses in details about the nature of pastoralism and cattle economy in Kongu by examining the hero-stones.

Gold and silver ornaments and iron, bronze and copper objects and weaponries along with objects of precious stone fall in the category of commodity production. The unearthed archaeological remains throw a great deal of light on metal crafting in early Kongu. The megalithic site of Kodumanal has yielded variety of metal stuffs. We also get evidence from the same site about an iron-smelting furnace.²¹ Availability of mineral wealth around the hilly region of Kongu might have helped the smelting industries. The burial sites excavated across the region also contained iron and copper objects of various kinds. Among the gold and silver coins found in south India, the major part comes from the Kongu region. Literature also indicates the use of metal for different purposes. It is said that elephants, chariots, and horses were ornamented with gold and silver jewels. The endowments to *panar* and *pulavar* were often included gold, silver and precious stone ornaments. References are also seen with regard to the existence of gold and blacksmiths i.e., *ponkollar* and *kollar*. *Kollar* are said to have separate work-shed for this purpose.

Plunder appears to have been an established way for accumulating wealth. Apparently, tribal warfare, battles and skirmishes that took place were often occasioned with plunder. Warriors who fell in at the time of plunder expedition were admired, honoured and worshiped. Plunder as a recognized institution was practiced at different levels. At the local level, it was between two villages or between two local social groups. Here it was undertaken by village youngsters and often for cattle wealth. 'Cattle raid was part of the bloody means of earning livelihood for the *maravar* community which showed little interest in cattle rearing or food cultivation.'²² At larger level, it was between two chiefdoms happened with the direct involvement of chiefs and gold, silver, ornaments, horse, elephants, cattle, chariot, weaponries, women were taken away. There were also highway robberies in which the traders who took long route for commodity exchange were victimized (Chart-1, Nos. 3, 5, 85, 87, etc). *Maravar* and *kanvar* seem to have possessed professional skill in plunder and robbery, besides being proficient warriors.

²¹ K. Rajan, op.cit., 2001, p.243.

²² Narayanan, M.G.S., 'The Warrior Settlements of the Sangam Age', *Indian History Congress, Proceedings, 43rd Session*, Kurukshetra, 1982.

Kongu, being a mountainous region, was not very much favourable for cultivation. However, there are plenty of evidences that attest the existence of *tinai* (grain) cultivation. *Tinai* seems to be popular among the foodstuffs, which often munched through with honey. We have many poems pointing to *kuravar*, *kanvar*, *vettuvavar* and *vedar* engagement in grain farming. Adiyaman's ancestors are praised to have brought sugarcane from the heaven. In another poem, Auvaiyar advises the chiefs of the country, which has thick, long paddy plants to pay tribute to Adiyaman in order to avoid warfare. It shows that paddy cultivation was yet to reach Kongu in its full-fledged form. Though there are possibilities for settled agriculture with paddy cultivation in Noyyal and Amaravati region and Kaveri region of lower part of Kongu, agriculture was in its insipient stage without being given any economic significance.

Living by gifts was usually a way of subsistence for the bards. Bards played divergent roles in the chieftdom. Usually they were not confined to particular chief or territory. They seem to have always been in search of patronage. They suffered with adverse material problems, whenever their patron died (Chart-1, Nos. 66, 67, 69). For instance, after the death of seven celebrated philanthropists, there was no chief willing to patronize bards and then these poverty driven bards had to seek asylum in the court of Muthiramalai Kumanan (Chart-1, No. 53). Two categories of bards are identified viz, *pulavar* (scholarly bards) and *panar* (lesser bards). In addition, there were also wandering mendicant groups, which include *paraiyar*, *kuttar*, etc. The nature of gifts varied from bard to bard and chief to chief. Usually, the powerful chiefs patronized their bards with gold, silver ornaments, chariot, horses, elephants, food grains, etc. while the lower chiefs offered meals, *madhu*, and petty ornaments. *Pulavar* category of bards often received valuable gifts. Certain ethics were followed while giving and receiving gifts. If the chiefs delayed in gift making or made it through third person, it was considered such an insult to the grantee. Some chiefs are portrayed as they had emotional attachment with the bards. For example, the Chief Adiyaman gave the rare myrobalan fruit, which was believed to prevent the ailments of old age and to assure longevity (Chart-1, No. 11). In one occasion Kumanan, when he had to hide himself in the forest on account of succession issue with his brother, gave his sword to a bard to cut his head for which his brother had announced some offer (Chart-1, No.57).

The prevalence of internal and external trade in natural resources is being frequently attested by both archaeological and literary sources. The specific natural products of particular *tinai* were exchanged with those of other. The hilly products like, honey, wood, bamboo-rice, etc., were exchanged for the *marudam* paddy or *mullai* dairy products, likewise, the salt and fish of *neital* for the paddy of *marudam* and the hills products of *kurunji*. Heroic songs speak about caravan traders who carried their merchandise through parched lands. There could have been a trade route (in medieval period it was known as *Datchana padha*) connecting north India with Peninsular India by passing through arid zones of the Kongu. There are also indications for the existence of specialized group called *vanigar* (trader). However, 'the trade was of peripheral interest to the Sangam society and they were motivated not by demands from within, but mainly by demands for natural products coming from the Roman Empire or Mauryan empire'²³. Among the unearthed Roman gold and silver coins, 80 per cent come from the Kongu region. Since the region was directly connected with western coast through Palaghat gap, it would have been an important trading outpost. The availability of precious stones, forest and hilly products such as semiprecious stones, teak, sandalwood, ivory, peacocks, and number of scent and spices including pepper could have attracted the foreign traders and they might have been exchanged for their gold and silver. In this connection, it has been assumed that 'the influx of gold and silver coins and bullion that characterized the period provides insufficient proof to argue for the existence of a monetized economy. The coins and bullion seem to have functioned as part of a valuable item rather than as money'²⁴.

5. Social Stratification

The social stratification based on material wealth and occupations had not yet taken its rigid form. In political sphere, the highest position of chief indicates some extent of their social distance from the ordinary kinsmen. There would have existed a reciprocal relationship between the chiefs and his tribesmen. The chief depended on his kinsmen in order to mobilize man power at the time of tribal warfare, cattle raids and plunder expedition. Similarly, security from the external threats and help at the time of material sufferings were expected from kinsmen. There is no indication that the

²³ M.G.S.Narayanan, *Re-Interpretation of South Indian History*, College Book House, Trivandrum, 1977, p.315.

²⁴ Rajan Gurukkal, 'Forms of Production and Forces of Change in Ancient Tamil Society' op.cit., p-168

kinsmen became a tax paying subject and economically dependable to the chiefs. Despite the number of references to several specialized groups such as *ulavar*, *kuttar*, *panar*, *umanar*, *vettuvavar*, *maravar*, *vedar*, *ayar*, *brahmans*, etc., it is said that the society was yet to come out from the hold of kin and clan bonds. The production activities were mainly confined to the use of familial labour and the produce were mainly meant for self-consumption. Therefore, the social cleavage based on production, i.e., the productive forces and the social relations of production, was not clear.

Nevertheless, there is still some possibility for a kind of stratification. Integration of various social groups and thus 'several specialized local economies' into a territorial unit would have produced surplus and exempted the chiefs from the process of production. The chiefs might have had their hand in long distance trade and controlled the influx of prestigious goods to the commoners in order to maintain their social distance—a phenomenon that has been noticed in several chiefdoms across the globe.²⁵ Champakalakshmi finds the control of 'sangam' rulers over long distance trade and their direct participations in it. Luxury items found in megalithic sites, specialized burial arrangements for some individuals, textual evidences describing the chiefs' physical ornaments, etc., can be taken into account to study the elitist nature of chiefs and the degree of social stratification which evolved in the early historic times. Especially in other parts of early Tamilakam, there were indications with regard to the existence of specialized categories of craftsmen, traders, full-time agriculturalists, the *vellalar* and agricultural labours, the *ulavar*.²⁶ Productive forces in paddy cultivation zones were gradually emerging. To some extent, the level of production is little more than the requirement for family consumption. However, the references to agriculture based village settlement in Kongu region are very less. Rather, classical songs inform the brave fight of Kongu chiefs with the *ventar* chiefs whose territory had fertile paddy fields.

²⁵ For details, see Timothy Earle, 'The Evolution of Chiefdom', *Current Anthropology*, vol.30, no.1, Feb-1998, pp.84-88; 'Chiefdom in Archaeological and Ethno Historical Perspective', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol.16, 1987, p.279-308. Winifred Cramer and Jonathan Hass, 'Tribe Versus Chiefdom in Lower Central America', *American Antiquity*, vol.50.no.4, Oct-1985, pp 738-54; Morton H Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society- An Essay in Political Anthropology*, Random House, New York, 1967.

²⁶ For *vellalar*, Tolkappiyam, porul, 635-1, for *ulavar*, Perumpanatrupadai, 197.

The contemporary archaeological and epigraphic sources throw light on other kinds of developments such as long distance trade, use of scripts, writing, urban settlements, sea-born travel, specialization in metallurgy, particularly in iron and gold, donation to religious sects such as Buddhism and Jainism etc. More than characterizing them as 'external stimulants', one needs to examine how they facilitated the cultural interactions and thereby extended their impact on emerging new social relations. In several anthropological and archaeological studies, metalworking is considered as the starting point for the development of productive forces and social division of labour.²⁷

Though one can consider the large amount of unearthed Roman coins as just 'valuable items' and not used in monetary sense, the local coins issued by the Ceras, Cholas, and the Pandiyas, brought into light by recent archaeological discoveries show that one should not undervalue the extent of trade.²⁸ Similarly, there were a section of people who were involved and specialized in script writing and written communication. There were other sections whose occupational task required having such documents written. The inter-linkage between trade, use of script and the role of *sramana* religions is getting more scholarly attention in the recent times than they received earlier.²⁹

It is generally believed that the social stratification encouraging non-kin labour in production began with the establishment of brahminical settlement. The presence of brahman and brahminical rituals in Kongu, particularly during the period of chiefs like Adiyaman is quite clear (Chart-1, No. 96). But the brahmans became landholders only during the medieval period particularly after the spread of *vellalar* settlement in this region. Both brahminical and agrarian institutions did not dominate the socio-economic scenario of Kongu despite their continuous presence beginning from the classical period. Moreover, any radical technological development with regard to agriculture during those period was to invent suitable irrigation methods for the proper usage of water. Irrigational technology in Tamilakam is said to pre-date even the arrival of iron-

²⁷ For details see B. Davidson, *The Lost Cities of Africa*, Little, Brown, Boston-Toronto, 1959; p. 67, R. Mauny, 'The Western Sudan', in P.L.Shinne (ed), *The African Iron Age*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1971, p.68; R.Oliver and B.M.Fagan, *Africa in the Iron Age*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975, p.42).

²⁸ R.Champakalakshmi, *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India 300 BC to 1300*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996, p.112.

²⁹ For example, see Iravatham Mahadevan, *Early Tamil Epigraphy: From the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A.D.*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

technology. The earliest evidence in this regard comes from a megalithic site in Thiruchenkodu.³⁰ It is also appropriate here to refer to a *purananuru* song, in which Avayar praises Adiyaman, a chief of classical period, that his ancestors introduced sugarcane cultivation in the region of Tagadur (modern Dharmapuri) Chart-1, No.17). The same poet informs us that she received paddy from Adiyaman as gift Chart-1, No.77).

Therefore, the perception that the emergence of non-kin labour during the early medieval period was mainly due to the expansion of brahminical settlement is not quite convincing. It signifies that the non-producing class constituted only the brahmins. It denies the development of complexity and social stratification within the local communities as a result of internal needs with the effect of ever-increasing population. The specific uses of the phrase such as *vellalar* and *uhzavar* in early literature is said to mean landowners and ploughman respectively. Right from beginning of the classical period, but more frequently during the medieval times, we come across references to land and other forms of gifts to various sections of people ranging from *panans* to brahmins.³¹ Most of them seem to be non-cultivators by profession.

Most of the heroic institutions began to disappear at the end of the classical period, particularly in the plain regions which were under the control of the *ventar* chiefs. Except for the mountainous and arid zones of the uplands like Kongu, the marked characteristics such as predatory raid, plunder, cattle raid, warfare, sharing food with commoners and even the kinship bond in production activity gradually lost their grip.³² Conversely, various occupational groups, not necessarily related to agricultural production, began to emerge. We come across references to brahman, *kollar*, *koyavar*,

³⁰ It is said that megalithic people in this region practised agriculture with irrigation. See Wheeler, *Early India and Pakistan*, New York, 1959, p.63; Sankalia, *Indian Archaeology Today*, New York, 1962, p.103. With regard to dating of irrigational technology, see Joan P Mencher, 'Kerala and Madras: A Comparative Study of Ecology and Social Structure, *Ethnology*, vol.5, no.2, 1966, pp. 135-71.

³¹ During the chiefdom society of Sangam Age, 'a large number of poems mention the practice of the chief granting Ur to *panar* (traditional nomadic bards, *brhamanar* (Vedic sacrificial priests) and the Maravar (tribal warlike bands)'. See M.G.S.Narayanan, 'The Role of Peasants in the Early History of Tamilakam in South Indian', *Social Scientist*, Vol.16, No.9, September, 1988, pp.17-34. Puram Nos. 11, 12, 29, 69, 224 (for gifts to *panas*). Puram. Nos.12, 15, 21, 166, 224, 367, 377, etc (for Gifts to brahman). There are several inscriptions of medieval period with regard to land grants to temple functionaries such as gardeners, temple girls, etc.

³² In this regard, it is wrong to categorize all the chiefs into a single 'hunter chief of big and small'. Political formation began to take new shape corresponding to the change in the basic subsistence, particularly in plain region which were under the *ventar* chiefs.

thatchar, *pulaithi* (washer women), weaver, *kuravar*, *parathavar*, *ayar*, *uzhavar*, *panar*, *porunar*, *parathai*, *koottar*, *kinaivar*, *paraiyar*, *kadampar*, *vanigar*, etc. Most of them evolved as castes during the later period. Evidences are also found with reference to slaves, worker and field labourers (*adiyor*, *vinaiyor* and *kalamar* respectively).³³ The *umanar* purchased salt from *parathavar* and sold it for paddy—the internal trade in basic subsistence became significant. The phrase such as *pulayan*, *pulathi izhipirappalan*, *uyarnton*, etc., testify the existing social disparity based on occupation and birth.³⁴ Particularly, those who were engaged in funeral rituals and offered *uppilla pindam* (rice ball without salt) for the deceased were considered *izhipirappalan* (person from lower birth).³⁵ In one instance, a learned brahman (*nanmarai muthalvar*) conducted funeral rites by reciting mantras and cutting the dead body into quarters by sword.³⁶ Here, the influx of Vedic rituals with traditional practice is identical with each other. Differentiation in terms of 'high-low and rich-poor' can also be incurred from megalithic burial methods.³⁷ The part of early Tamilakam thereby began their departure from its hold on traditional institutional practices. The same occupational groups, whose role was considered essential in warfare, plunder raids, etc., in the heroic age became unwanted, and came to be called *izhipirappalan*. This testifies the transition in the productive relations and the relatively lesser role of these social groups in the new social set-up.

Theoretically, brahminical settlements can be studied to understand how the social relations of particular mode of production cultivate certain religious thoughts and practices.³⁸ It can be extended to the agro-pastoral social formation of heroic age. Was there any specialized group within the heroic society which, by controlling the means to

³³ Puram Nos. 212, 387; Kalittokai, No.88, Tolkkappiyam, Porul: 25. Also see, A. Sivasubramaniyan, *Tamizhakathil Adimai Murai*, (Slave System in Tamilakam), Kalachuvadu Pathippakam, Chennai, 2005, pp.22-25.

³⁴ Puram. 82, 270, 287 and 289. The term *uyarnton* (high birth), is said to mean 'primarily to distance the brahmins from the folk'. But it seems that the category includes other people like traders, chiefs as well. See, Tol.Porul 31:1, 33:2.

³⁵ Puram, 74 and 93.

³⁶ Puram-93.

³⁷ M.G.S.Narayanan, 'The Role of Peasants in the Early History of Tamilakam in South Indian', op.cit.

³⁸ Maurice Godelier explains Marx's approach to religion, see Maurice Godelier 'Economy and Religion: an Evolutionary Optical Illusion', in J.Friedman and M.J.Rowlands (eds), *The Evolution of Social Systems*, Duckworth, p.4.

access the divine power (for example the rituals connected to installing and worshipping herostones) claimed certain portions of social product and labour? Can *panar*, *paraiyar*, *pulathier*, etc., be grouped in this category?³⁹ In the meantime, there were also several sramana religions, which had left their traces very strongly in early Tamilakam, Kongu region in particular. Can one simply brush aside the socio-political relevance of these religions? If not, what is their contribution to the social formation that was in making? These questions have not been analyzed exclusively yet.

To conclude the discussion on early settlers and emergence of chiefdoms in Kongu, three points can be highlighted. First of all, three stages can be identified in the structural changes in society, economy and polity during the Sangam period. The first stage witnessed the early social groups such as *kurumbar*, *kongar* and *kosar*. During this stage, the chiefdom level of political formation was yet to develop, since these tribes were semi-nomadic and kept themselves in moving. Second stage marks the period of seven philanthropists. Now we see the emergence of chiefdoms with addition of plunder with the previous hunting and pastoral form of subsistence. Influx of shifting cultivation and horticulture was the significant pointer to the third stage; it was the period of chiefs like Kumanan, Nannan, Perunkuni, son of Adiyaman, etc, who came to power after the death of the seven celebrated chiefs. Now one can see a reasonably developed chiefly principality.

³⁹ While analyzing Marx's perception on religion, Godelier presumes that religious elements are identical even in primitive societies. For example in the hunting-gathering society of Eximo, the Shaman performed the role of the priest 'with specialized duties to intercede with the supernatural powers that control the reproduction of nature and culture. In exchange for his services, the priest receives a few gifts and additional portion of game, etc.' Therefore, there begins 'surplus-labour aimed at securing the existence of a ritual specialist'. For details see Maurice Godelier, *ibid*, p.7. It is the general opinion that most of the indigenous practices, rituals done by *panas*, *paraiyars*, had were complicated Sanskrit meaning and thus became the exclusive domain of a brahmana. See M.G.S. Narayanan, *The Role of Peasants in the Early History of Tamilakam in South Indian*, *op.cit.*, p.26. Also see, Raj Kaudhaman, *Pattum Thokayum Tholkappiyamum : Tamizh Samuka Uruvakam*, Thamizhini, 2006, p.107.

Secondly, the social, economic and political progression in Kongu is slightly different from other parts of Tamilakam. In the region of the Chola, Pandiya and Chera, we find a relatively developed administrative system with settled agriculture, but it was not in the case of Kongu. Here the scenario still resembled the socio-political structure primarily based on cattle economy. In the light of classical texts, we understand that there were various levels of chiefs ranging from *vedar* (hunter) to *ventan* (king). The heroic attributes were high among the small chiefs and gradually got reduced towards the *ventar* chiefs. As said elsewhere, most of these heroic songs were composed not on *ventar* chiefs but on other categories. Various characteristics of heroic society are absent among the *ventar* chiefs. While some poets expressed their frustration that the nature of 'giving' in heroic society has lost its value, others advise the chiefs (*ventar*) about the importance of cultivation and say prime duty of a king (chief) is to develop irrigational arrangements and thereby facilitate cultivation. Therefore, one can argue that political formations began to take new shape corresponding to the change in the basic subsistence, particularly in plain regions, which were under the *ventar* chiefs. But the regions where minor chiefs held their power, the heroic activities continued to be in practice.

Finally, when one talks about the classical period, we presume that the heroic traditions and institutions such as cattle raiding, predatory raiding, etc., were its marking characters. Frequent references to such characterizations widely refer to the political nature of chiefs, particularly in the hilly uplands, areas that were under the control of small chiefs known as *velir*. Now when we attempt to study the social formation of the succeeding period, our focus suddenly shifts particularly to plain regions in order to use the readily available epigraphic records. But a tradition of historical memory developed in the form of hero stone specifically in highlands like Kongu indicates not only the continuation of the previously mentioned heroic institutions but also the dilution of such practices to commoners. Further, the subsequent historical developments and societal changes here always contradict the general notion of transition in south India. In the case of transition to agrarian economy, we see that the local tribes such as *vettuva* gave up their traditional occupation of hunting, herding and shifting cultivation and became full-time agriculturalists. At the same time or little later, there was also large-scale *vellala* immigration from the plain regions. Here, the nature of agrarian development cannot be viewed either ways—'emergence' from within or 'expansion' from outside.

Therefore, simple unilinear way of transition may not be applicable even within a region like Tamilakam. Even in the early agro-pastoral society, one needs to look for the roots of various historical processes, which made their presence known more vividly during the Middle Ages. If such bases of historical development of ecologically varying (sub) regions were distinguishable, then it would provide a much clearer analytical framework. In fact, it would enrich our understanding of regional history as a whole.

Chart-1: References in Classical Tamil Texts

No	Text & Number	References			
		Polity	Society	Economy	Chiefs
1	Purananuru-22	Cheran's, chief of Kolli hills, tribute, redistribution	<i>kurravai</i> dance	Paddy	Ceran Irumporai
2	Purananuru-24	<i>mudhir velir</i>	<i>parathavar, uzhava</i>	<i>madhu, thinai</i>	Ceran Irumporai
3	Purananuru-31	Warfare, Bravery	<i>maravar</i>	-	Cholan Nalankilli
4	Purananuru-33	Warfare	<i>vettuvan</i>	Hunting, Exchange	
5	Purananuru-43	<i>maravar perumakan</i>	<i>maravar</i>	-	Nalankilli's brother.
6	Purananuru-87	Bravery	<i>thatchan</i>	Carpentry	Adiyaman
7	Purananuru-88	<i>malavar perumakan</i> , Bravery	<i>malavar</i>	-	Adiyaman
8	Purananuru-89	Bravery	<i>mallar</i>	-	Adiyaman
9	Purananuru-90	Warfare	<i>malavar</i>	-	Adiyaman
10	Purananuru-91	<i>athiyar ko</i> , gift	<i>maravar</i>	Ornaments	Adiyaman
11	Purananuru-91	Bravery, gift	-	<i>nanmarai mudhalvar</i>	Adiyaman
12	Purananuru-94	Bravery	-		Adiyaman
13	Purananuru-95	Bravery, weaponry	<i>kollan</i>	Metal work	Adiyaman
14	Purananuru-96	Bravery	<i>ur</i>	-	Adiyaman
15	Purananuru-97	Bravery, warfare, tribute (<i>thirai</i>)	<i>ur, maravar</i>	<i>paddy</i>	Adiyaman
16	Purananuru-98	Warfare	<i>maravar</i>	-	Adiyaman
17	Purananuru-99	Ancestry, warfare	<i>panar</i>	Sugarcane	Adiyaman
18	Purananuru-100	Bravery, warfare	-	Hunting	Adiyaman
19	Purananuru-101	Gifts	-	-	Adiyaman
20	Purananuru-102	Generosity	<i>umanar</i>	Trade	Adiyaman
21	Purananuru-103	Generosity	-	-	Adiyaman
22	Purananuru-104	Bravery	<i>maravar</i>	-	Adiyaman
23	-	-	-	-	-
24	-	-	-	-	-
25	-	-	-	-	-
26	-	-	-	-	-
27	-	-	-	-	-
28	-	-	-	-	-

No	Text & Number	References			
		Polity	Society	Economy	Chiefs
29	-	-	-	-	-
30	-	-	-	-	-
31	-	-	-	-	-
32	-	-	-	-	-
33	Purananuru-127	Gifts	<i>panar</i>		Ay
34	Purananuru-128	Podiyamalai	<i>adal makalir</i>	-	Ay
35	Purananuru-129	Bravery, Gifts, <i>kilavan</i> .	<i>kuravar, madhu</i>	-	Ay
36	Purananuru-130	Defeat of Kongar, Gifts	<i>kongar,</i>	-	Ay
37	Purananuru-131	Hills and forest	-	-	Ay
38	Purananuru-132	<i>ur, kudi</i>	<i>Kudi</i>	<i>kinaru</i>	Ay
39	Purananuru-134	Gifts		<i>vanigar</i>	Ay
40	Purananuru-135	Gifts(elephant, horse, chariot)	<i>pulavar, panar, kuttar</i>		Ay
43	-	-	-	-	-
44	-	-	-	-	-
45	-	-	-	-	-
46	-	-	-	-	-
47	-	-	-	-	-
48	-	-	-	-	-
49	-	-	-	-	-
50	Purananuru-150	<i>Nadu</i>	<i>vettuvan, ilayar</i>		Koperunalli
52	Purananuru-152	<i>kilavan, nadu, kolli ko</i>	<i>vettuvar</i>	Artisans, Hunting	Ori
53	Purananuru-158	Mention of Seven Philanthropist chiefs, <i>kilavan</i>			Kumanan
54	Purananuru-159	Bravery	<i>kanavar</i>	<i>tinai</i>	Kumanan
55	Purananuru-160	Generosity	Family life	Gold	Kumanan
56	Purananuru-163	Generosity, <i>kilavan</i>	Family life		Kumanan
57	Purananuru-165	Gift giving	Moral ethics		Kumanan
58	Purananuru-166	<i>Yagam</i>	Four Vedas		-
59	Purananuru-168	<i>Kilavan</i> , sharing food	<i>kuravar</i>	<i>tinai, ulavu</i>	Pittan
60	Purananuru-169	<i>Ilamkosar</i>	<i>kosar, kanmar</i>		Pittan
61		Gifts, <i>kudi, cirrur,</i>			Pittan

No	Text & Number	References			
		Polity	Society	Economy	Chiefs
62	Purananuru-177	<i>Kudanadu</i>	<i>vettuvar, maravar, yeinar</i>	-	Kariyathi
63	Purananuru-204	Ori, Gifts	Ethics of giving and asking	-	Ori
64	Purananuru-205	Adiyaman, Delay in giving	Ethics of taking	-	Adiyaman
65	Purananuru-214	Adiyaman, Gifting in absent	Ethics of giving	-	Adiyaman
66	Purananuru-230	Death of Yelini, <i>kurram, kudi</i>	<i>ulavarn</i>	Cultivation	Yelini
67	Purananuru-231	Death of Adiyaman	Death ceremony	-	Adiyaman
68	Purananuru-236	Death of Adiyaman , generosity	Herostone, toddy	-	Adiyaman
69	Purananuru-240	Death of Ay Andiran	<i>sati</i>	-	Ay Andiran
70	Purananuru-241	Death of Ay Andiran	-	-	Ay Andiran
73	Purananuru-306	Herostone	-	-	-
74	Purananuru-314	Herostone	-	-	-
75	Purananuru-315	Generosity	Sharing food with kinsmen	-	Adiyaman
76	Purananuru-374	-	Parai, music	-	Ay Andiran
78	Purananuru-392	Sharing food, toddy drinking	<i>kudi</i>	Plough	Adiyaman
79	Purananuru-396	Gifts (dress, food)	Musical instruments	Millets	Son of Adiyaman Nedumananji
81	Akananuru-15	Expedition of Av (Vel) chief against Malavar	<i>malavar-tribe, Velirkulam</i>	-	Malaver
82	Akananuru-34	Nannan's capital	<i>kosar</i> , their truthfulness		Nannan
83	Akananuru-35	-	-	-	Nannan
84	-	-	-	-	-
85	Akananuru-44	Titayan, Porunan, Yeluni, Erumaiuran	<i>vettuvan</i> ,	-	Titayan,
86	Akananuru-45	Warfare	-	-	Pazhayan, Nannan
87	Akananuru-53	<i>maravar</i> , Herostone	-	-	
88	Akananuru-63		-	-	-
89	Akananuru-67	<i>maravar</i>	-	-	-
90	Akananuru-69	<i>maravar</i> , Herostone	-	-	-

No	Text & Number	References			
		Polity	Society	Economy	Chiefs
91	Akananuru-126	Ay, <i>maravar</i> , warfare		Booty	-
92	Akananuru-135	Battle between two chiefs, Titian and Anni.	-	cultivation, fishing, exchange	Evvi
93	Akananuru-142	Existence of 14 velirs chiefs.	-	-	Velirs
94	Akananuru-145	Nannan (chief) and his gallantry. His brave army.	-	-	Nannan
95	Akananuru-143	Battle between Titian and Anni.	-	-	Titian, Anni
96	Akananuru-144	Pittan (chief) and his Kudirai hills, Gifts	-	-	Pittan.
97	Akananuru-149	Use of spear and horse in war	-	-	Malavar
98	Akananuru-152	-	-	Roman Trade	.
99	Akananuru-167	Generosity	Vegetation of Ay's hills	-	Ay
101	Akananuru-181	Nature of Nannan's hills	Toddy, use of chariot.	-	Nannan
102	Akananuru-196	Warfare between chiefs	-	-	Ay Eyinan, Minjili
103	Akananuru-198	Fight between Titiyan and <i>kosar</i> .	Women position. <i>kosars'</i> nature of warfare.	-	Anni Minjili
104	Akananuru-199	Ay and his generosity.		-	Ay
105	Akananuru-208	Battle between Nannan and Chera	-	Use of Gold.	Nannan
106	Akananuru-209	Battle between Eyinan and Minjili	-	-	Nannan, Minjili
107	Akananuru-216	Battle between Pandiyan Nedunchezhan and seven chiefs. Ori and his land	Weaponry	-	Ori
108	Akananuru-231	<i>ilankosar</i> , Adan Elini	Weaponry	-	Elini
109	Akananuru-253	<i>kanvar</i> , Robbery	Weaponry	-	-
110	Akananuru-258	Battle between Kongar and Pandyan.	-	-	Pandyan
111	Akananuru-262	Nannan, Udiyan, <i>velir</i> ,		Treasury, Gold	Nannan
112	Akananuru-282	Pekan (chief), Horse, Bravery, benevolence	Kosar, women position	Millets	Pekan

No	Text & Number	References			
		Polity	Society	Economy	Chiefs
113	Akananuru-289	<i>kanvan, kuravan</i> tribes	Elephant hunting, use of arrow	Gold, silver, pearl, precious stones	-
115	Akananuru-303	<i>kanavan</i>		Millets	-
116					
117	Akananuru-331	<i>kanvar</i> , Plunder	<i>Yeinar</i>	-	-
118	Akananuru-342	Titian and his benevolence	Village settlement, Toddy		Titian
119	Akananuru-356	<i>kanvar, maravar,</i>	Cattle raiding	Cattle economy	-
120	Akananuru-365	Nannan and his Parammpu hills.	-	Crafts	Nannan
121	Akananuru-368	Herostone	-	-	-
122	Akananuru-5	<i>kanvar, kongar, kuravar,</i>	Kongar's dancing festival (<i>ulli vizha</i>)	Millets	-
123	Narrinai -6	<i>kuravar</i>	-	-	-
124	Narrinai-10	Warfare	-	-	Ori
125	Narrinai-33	Effort of Chola king to overwhelm Kongars.	-	-	-
126	Narrinai-44	Maravar's bravery	-	-	-
127	Narrinai-45	<i>kuravar</i>	-	-	-
129	Narrinai-52	<i>maravar</i> and their arms	-	-	-
130	Narrinai-59	Ori's gallantry	<i>malavar.</i>	-	-
131	Narrinai-65	<i>vettuvan</i>	Rabbit hunting	Use of spade	-
132	Narrinai-75	<i>kanavar</i>	-	Hunting	-
133	Narrinai-82	<i>kanavan</i>	-	Hunting	-
134	Narrinai-85	<i>kanavar</i>	-	Pig hunting	-
135	Narrinai-86	<i>kanavar</i>	Hunters' settlement.	Hunting	Family.
136	Narrinai-102	<i>maravar</i>	Use of Spear	-	-
137	Narrinai-108	-	<i>kuravar</i> women folk	Millets	-
138	Narrinai-148	Kuravars' Chief	Village settlement	Millets	-
139	Narrinai-165	<i>maravar</i>	-	-	-
141	Narrinai-180	Benevolence	-	-	Ay Andiran
142	Narrinai-185	Kurukkai battle field	-	-	Anni, Titiyan

No	Text & Number	References			
		Polity	Society	Economy	Chiefs
143	Narrinai-189	Nature of Kolli hills	Goddess of Kolli hills	-	-
144	Narrinai-192	Vettuvās' Chief	-	-	-
145	Narrinai-201	Kolli hills	-	-	-
146	Narrinai-205	<i>malai kuravann</i> , Kolli hills	-	-	-
147	Narrinai-212	<i>kuravar</i>	-	Shifting cultivation	-
148	Narrinai-228	<i>vettuvan</i>	Hunting	-	-
149	Narrinai-237	<i>vettuvan</i>	Elephant hunting	-	-
150	Narrinai-255	Gifts	-	-	Ay Andiran
151	Narrinai-253	<i>kanavar</i>	Ritual	-	-
152					
153	Narrinai-270	Ori's administration	-	Hunting	Ori, Minjili,
154	Narrinai-276	Nannan's cavalry	Thatched house	-	Nannan
155	Narrinai-280	<i>vettuvan</i>	<i>vettuva</i> women	Hunting, Millets	-
156	Narrinai-282	<i>mallar, velir</i>	-	-	Velirs
157	Narrinai-306	<i>maravan</i> , warfare	-	-	-
158	Narrinai-320	<i>kanavar</i>	-	Millets	-
159	Narrinai-336	Expedition against Ori	-	-	Ori
160	Narrinai-346	<i>kanavan</i>	-	Millets	-
161	Narrinai-381	Kolli hills	-	-	-
162	Narrinai-386	Gifts	-	-	Anji
163	Narrinai-87	<i>kanavar</i>	-	Tilling	-
164	Sirupanarrupadai-91	-	-	-	-
165	Sirupanarrupadai-95	-	-	-	-
166	Sirupanarrupadai-110	-	-	-	-
167	Sirupanarrupadai-14	-	-	-	-
168	Padirru Pattu-15	Warfare, Bravery, Gifts	Izhinthor	Precious Stones	-
169	Padirru Pattu-20	Bravery, Gifts	<i>panar, kootar</i>	--	-
170	Padirru Pattu-22	Battle with Kongar	<i>Kongar</i>	Ornaments	Kongar
171	Padirru Pattu-24	Warfare, Generosity	<i>pandar</i>	Paddy	Anji
172	Padirru Pattu-32	Warfare	<i>panar</i>	-	-
173	Padirru Pattu-33	Warfare	-	-	-

No	Text & Number	References			
		Polity	Society	Economy	Chiefs
174	Padirru Pattu-36	Warfare	-	-	-
175	Padirru Pattu-37	Warfare	<i>panar</i>	-	-
176	Padirru Pattu-40	Bravery	<i>viraliyar</i>	Ornaments	-
177	Padirru Pattu-41	Bravery	-	-	-
207	Purananuru-293	Bravery, ventar	-	-	-
208	Kurunthokai-15	-	-	-	-
209	Akananuru-113	-	-	-	-
210	Akananuru-251	Warfare, Mouriyar, Kosar	Kosar	-	Pazhayan
211	Akananuru-90	-	-	-	-
213	Akananuru-205	Battle between Kosar and Cholas	Kosar	-	-
214	Akananuru-216	-	Kosar	Toddy, Fishing	-
207	Purananuru-15	Warfare	Kanmar	-	-
208	-	-	-	-	-
209	Purananuru-251	Bravery of Hills people	-	-	-

Chapter-IV

Towards the State: Stratification and Sedentarisation (6th to 10th CE)

The chapter analyzes the nature of an extended chiefdom and a sedentized agropastoral social formation developed during the 6th to 10th CE. The emergence of political societies and their eventual collapse, extension or transformation into a state system is closely associated with the expansion and intensification of agrarian activities. Tillage compelled the social groups, which were hitherto semi-nomadic in nature, to develop its relation with land resulting in a permanent attachment with it.¹ Response to agricultural opportunities varies from place to place in the context of time and space. Evidently, the adaptation of agriculture or assimilation to agrarian society is not preferred by the people of mountainous and forest regions. They are, by and large, conservative in leaving behind the age long cattle/pastoral economy.

This kind of pastoral entrenchment, a widespread phenomenon, has been noticed in several parts of the world.² Studies reveal that this happens not only because of the agro-unfriendly ecological setting but also owing to the propitious situation to cattle income and the strong rootedness of society in pastoralism.³ Thus, people, who are relatively rich in cattle wealth were reluctant to have a new subsistence economy, in this case agriculture.⁴ Pastoralism had developed certain social norms, cultural practices, customs and traditions in which the everyday life of the individual were designed and determined by the passion for cattle wealth. More than means subsistence, accumulation of cattle was a prerequisite for prestige, an incentive to keep man engaged in fighting, and a way of achieving heroic fame. Therefore, cattle in pastoral communities are not

¹ For example, several parts of Africa still have pastoral social formation. The study of such societies gives great insight in understanding the nature of developed pastoralism, see John G. Galaty and Pierre Bonte, *Herdsmen, Warriors and Traders: Pastoralism in Africa*, Westview Press, San Francisco and Oxford, 1991; H.K. Schneider, 'The Subsistence Role of Cattle Among the Pokot and in East Africa' in *American Anthropologist*, LIX, 1957, pp 278-300; idem, 'Economic Development and Economic Change: the Case of African Cattle', in *Current Anthropology*, Vol. XV, No. 3, September, 1974; and Melville J. Herskovits, 'The Cattle Complex in East Africa', in *American Anthropologists, New Series*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, 1926, pp. 230-72.

² For example, Suzette Heald, 'Agricultural Intensification and the Decline of Pastoralism: A Case Study from Kenya', *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. LXIX, No. 2, 1999, pp. 213-37. Roosevelt has studied how the introduction of maize cultivation lead to the emergence of politico society, see *Parmanan: Pre-Historic Maize and Manioc Subsistence Along the Amazon and Orinoco*, Academic, New York, 1980. Sedentarization and the social and political transformation have been focused by E.R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization*, Random House, New York, 1962; and Peter D. Little, 'Social Differentiation and Pastoralist Sedentarization in Northern Kenya' in *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. LV, No. 3, 1985, pp. 243-61.

³ H.K. Schneider, 'Economic Development and Economic Change: The Case of East African Cattle', op. cit., pp. 259-76.

⁴ Idem, tries to answer the question: Why do people, who are relatively rich in livestock usually resist development? See, *ibid.*, pp. 259-76.

only a matter wealth but also associated with the social reputation of individuals—a ritual and status-marking object. In such a situation 'the theft of sheep in a family removes something more than a material object, it take away also a spiritual value'.⁵ It is, therefore, an act of humiliation that mortifies one's status in society. One has to risk his life to recover stolen cattle. On the other hand, raiding cattle belonging to other groups brings to one the highest virtue, profit, food and obviously a retaliatory raid. Those who are involved in raiding and retaliatory raiding represent value and strength of that particular segment of a society. Manhood is achieved in raiding cattle or defending them from being raided. Thus in brief, in the world of pastoralism there had developed a tradition of raiding and defending from being raided in which violence and loss of life were highly admired and attached to prestige and social status of a person.

As stated, the mechanism of pastoralism is well rooted in mountain and forest regions than the plain areas. Therefore, the transition from socio-economic dominance of pastoralism to that of agriculture is presumably rapid in plain region while the hill and forest regions responded sluggishly to an agricultural preponderated set up. In spite of it, they are not totally cut off from cultivation. Agriculture was practised minimally in the form of shifting cultivation, which was restricted to dry crops like millets.⁶ In a sense, these crops were preferred mainly because they provided both food and fodder. Along with the natural development of agriculture—comparatively a longwinded process, the mountainous and forest regions remained places for immigration particularly from surrounding agricultural tracts owing to various reasons like population growth, emerging demand for fresh land for cultivation, the states intervention to extend its control and the huge spatial availability in such region. All eventually altered the pastoral set up giving way to the emergence of society dominated by agriculturalists.

In such agro-pastoral society and economy, the polity remains still at chiefdom level, however with much more political complexity. Development of hereditary social ranking (with ascriptive membership) and beginning of economic stratification were the salient features of complex or developed chiefdoms. In complex chiefdom at least two levels of political process are identified viz., central level of decision making and

⁵ J.K. Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1964, p. 198.

⁶ Maize and millet cultivation has been part of several pastoral societies, for example, see Schneider, 'Economic Development and Economic Change: The Case of East African Cattle', op. cit., pp. 259-76; and Edgar V. Winans, 'The Political Context Economic Adaptation in the Southern Highland of Tanganyika', in *America Anthropologist, New Series*, Vol. LXVII, No. 2, 1965, pp. 435-41.

decision making and local level. Most of the local operations were handled, settled at local level, with occasional intervention of central regulators. Thus, the role of the central level of decision making is to regulate the local units which had capability of independent action. Having a sizable number of population, warfare, cattle raid, skirmishes, became much more frequent in developed chiefdoms and it obviously required the involvement of local regulators. At either level the high official functions were assigned to the privileged group, and in course of time it became hereditary. The local unit is often comprised of few communities or a reasonable number of families bonded by blood relation. The emergence of chiefs or regulator at local level is not much visible in the early stage of chiefdom. As the local hereditary chiefs directly involve in local issues they were referred predominantly in the contemporary traditions. Within the local unit, the stratification, power structure and social ranking are explicit. This brief anthropological views on extend chiefdom and semidetarized agro-pastoral society will provide necessary insights to understand the social scenario in Kongu during the 6th to 10th centuries.

1. Note on sources

The herostones as contemporary records and with a tradition for historical memory, serve as a substantial part of primary references cited in this chapter. An analysis of the contents of these herostones explicitly expresses the nature of polity and society. In south India, the practice of erecting herostones, generally for the purpose of worshipping, can be considered as a continuous tradition of megalithic burial method, marked by continuity with change. It reminds us of the megalithic *menhirs*, dolmens and cists.⁷ It may be noted that herostones were worshipped as the megalithic cists. Nevertheless, there is a slight difference in the motive of these memorials. The megalithic monuments were part of death rituals and burial practices. More than commemorating the deceased person, they were supposed to ward off attacks of evil spirits. The herostones glorify the act of heroism and venerate the gallantry and bravery expressed in cattle raiding, hunting, battle, local skirmishes, etc. The practice of hero cult by erecting stone is a form of commemorating heroism, prevalent wherever pastoralism is well rooted. And it is one of the visible features of many pastoral

⁷ K. Rajan, *South Indian Memorial Stones*, Mano Pathippakam, Thanjore, 2000, pp. 53, 56.

societies across the world. As stated above, pastoralism is apparently well rooted, uninterruptedly developed and predominantly practiced in frontier, forest region, where the intervention of established agrarian economy based state is relatively less, and the ecological sustainability for livestock herding is remarkably high. Accordingly the frequency of herostones is comparatively higher in such upland and forest regions than in plain agrarian regions.⁸

Early references with regard to the practice of herostone worship in south India are found in classical Tamil literature.⁹ The method of hero cult and the rituals around setting up a herostone have been vividly elucidated in *Tolkappiyam*.¹⁰ In fact, the major part of it describes heroism. The hero, his bravery in battle, thirst for victory, sense of honour in getting glorious wounds, generosity, fierce look, toddy drinking, talent in hunting, interest in music and dance, kind heartedness, etc., are the major themes of these literary traditions. In some sense, in their description of heroic culture they are certainly comparable with Greek classical literature.¹¹ Interestingly, in south India, literary sources preceded the archaeological sources in referring to the practice of setting up herostones.

However, one can find perceptible differences in the heroism depicted in classical literature and that of the herostones. For instance, first of all, the heroes of classical Tamil literature are kings (powerful chiefs), minor chiefs (often representing the whole tribe distributed widely) and very rarely local personalities. On the contrary, the heroes of these herostones are locally influential persons, belonging to segments of society—segmented lineage, community or a family group. Most of them are either servants or soldiers, and rarely kings or chiefs. Secondly, from the literary tradition, it can be seen that the cult of heroism was prevalent enormously throughout the region

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 26-29.

¹⁰ Six such stages have been lined up: (i) search for a stone; (ii) fixing of an auspicious time; (iii) lustration or ceremonial bathing of the stone; (iv) setting it up; (v) celebration, feasting; and (vi) praise and worship. Quoted from K. Kailashpathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry*, Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 295.

¹¹ 17 For analysis on Tamil heroic tradition as described in the light of Tamil classical literature, see Kailashpathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry*, op. cit.; N. Vanamamalai, 'Dacoits and Robbers in Tamil Ballad', in *Folklore*, Calcutta, February 1971; and Stuart H. Blackburn, 'The Folk Hero and Class Interest in Tamil Heroic Ballads', in *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, 1978. For Greek analysis on Greek heroic traditions, see Carla M. Antonaccio, 'Contesting the Past: Hero Cults, Tomb Cult, and Epic in Early Greece', in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 3, 1994; L. Farnell, *Greek Hero-Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, Oxford, 1921; C. Dougherty and L. Kurke, ed, *Cultural Practice in Archaic Greece*, Cambridge, 1993; and N. Coldstream, 'Hero-Cults in the Age of Homer' *Journal of Historical Studies*, Vol. XCVI, 1976.

irrespective of the plains, hills and forests. But in contradiction, the cult of planting herostones (for local heroes) is mostly confined to arid region (consisting of forests and hills in the frontier locality). And it has been noted that more than ninety per cent of the herostones were collected from where the megalithic monuments were found in abundance.¹² Similarly, the literary heroes were involved in reasonably larger battles, hunting expeditions and high philanthropic activities. The heroes depicted in herostones were local people, honored for their heroism in local skirmishes, cattle raiding, hunting on small scale, etc. And finally, in the heroic poems, heroic activities were praised by influential bards who yearned for gifts. Since it was an attempt to attract the attention of chiefs, there would obviously be exaggeration. Herostones, on the other hand, were set up by kinsmen or close relative of the heroes, as a way to element historical memory, for strengthening the lineage tie and above all, to glorify the spirit of heroism, precisely because of its linkages with the subsistence economy of people.

In the early period, these herostones were called by different names, *nadukarkkal*, *pulikuttikal*, *verakkal*, etc. They have been collected from agricultural fields, forest areas, alongside the ancient trade routes, banks of tanks, in and outside of temples, etc. And in certain places they are still worshipped. There are 70 such herostones, which are referred to in this chapter. The Chart-2, at the end of this chapter, gives in chronological order of these memorial stones. For the convenience of referencing their nature and subject matter along with where they are found are also classified. Towards the tenth century, however, the use of herostones as a historical tradition gradually diminished and gave way to the predominance of stone inscriptions. The transformation from short herostone to long stone inscription itself reflects the transition in the socio-economic formation. Unlike herostones, the stone inscriptions are records of contemporary land and monetary transactions, donations made to temples, local legal arrangements, etc.

2. Societal Structure and Stratification

The sixth century is certainly a significant period for a number of reasons in the history of the south Indian socio-political formation. It was during that time that the plain region of south India witnessed the collapse of the early classical chiefdoms into state.

¹² K. Rajan, *South Indian Memorial Stones*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

The establishment of the Pallava rule contributed to the south Indian societies, which at that time had matured enough to deliver a new structural transformation, for the emergence of the state. The pastoral mode of subsistence, highly honoured hunting, the cult of heroism, ceaseless local skirmishes and tribal warfare, etc., gradually relegated into the background and was overshadowed by the emerging profound passion towards agriculture. Providing and extending the irrigational accessibility, an ostensible way to generate more and more dependence of subjects, were major tasks, which the Pallava rulers dealt with, at least during the initial days. With the expansion of sedentarized agrarian settlements, the ruling elites were able to effectively institutionalize an exploitative system, the state apparatus, to subtract the surplus in agricultural production. The process of ideological legitimization by facilitating the diffusion of state religion into local communities, development of the trade in agricultural commodities, spread of the Bhakti movement, diffusion of Sanskrit and brahminical institutions, and the growth of temple centred urbanization were some other consequent remarkable changes in south Indian social formation during the Pallava and subsequent period. All these developments culminated into a full-fledged state society in the plain regions of peninsular India.

Despite these new developments in plain regions, it is clear from the contemporary sources that the socio-political and economical developments in the plains hardly made any impact on the highlands of Tamil Nadu. Rather, it exemplified the extension of the customs, practices and institutions of the classical period. Despite this incommensurate process, society neither remained static nor sluggish. But the developments were not strong enough to sustain the components of agrarian dominated state society. In a way, these developments can be termed as complex chiefdoms with different operational levels having highly segmented lineage groups.

A critical analysis of the sources represents the gradual changes in society. For example, the main concerns of the records of the sixth to tenth centuries is about the continued practices of cattle raiding, hunting and inter-tribal warfare. However, there are slight changes in the records of the eleventh century. Thereafter, the references to cattle raiding get reduced and they begin to speak about some new features like religious endowments, fixing of certain taxes, merchant activities, construction of wells, etc. Moreover, towards the eleventh century, the nature of historical records itself changes from brief herostones to long inscriptional records. The pastoral society expressed in the

herostones certainly had sedentary village settlements since most of the records give details about villages, where incidents of cattle raids and skirmishes occurred. The genealogy of the hero, that is, identifying the hero as a son or a grandson of certain personages, indicates that they would have inhabited the locality for several generations. From the classical literatures and the megalithic monuments, it can be assumed that the social groups that belonged to this regions were semi-nomadic pastoral-cum-hunters. Rather, the herostone references illustrate the gradual sedentarization of early wandering social groups into some sort of village settlements.

All available records of this period refer to some customs and institutions of the classical (Sangam) age, such as hero worship, cattle raids and tribal warfare, which continued predominantly up to the tenth century. But an apparent difference that can be drawn from these herostones is that the personage involved in such a heroic act was a locally influential man. They were not classical celebrities such as Kari, Ori and Adiyaman, who represented the whole tribe. Therefore, what was once considered high culture was localized. The short herostone messages generally point to the relations of local lineage groups or sub-units of something, which encompasses the entire tribe. Many herostones have been set up in order to honour such local heroes who lost their lives in tribal warfare or in cattle raids and in some cases, fighting with beasts (hunting?). The cattle raids and skirmishes mentioned therein were either between two villages (Chart-2, Nos. 7, 8 and 11) or between two supra village clan groups (Chart-2, Nos. 1, 19, 21 and 30). These indicate not only the established village settlements but the considerable growth in population. The terms *nadu* (supra village unit) and *ur* (village) are mentioned while locating the spot where the hero was killed. At least in six instances the heroes lost their lives: 1) *pusalenru pattan* (killed when he waged attack on others) (Chart-2, No. 5), 2) *pusalil pattan* (killed when somebody attacked his village) (Chart-2, No. 6), 3) *thorukontu pattan* (killed when he waged a cattle raid) (Chart-2, No. 10), 4) *thoruviduviththu pattan* (killed while recovering raided cattle) (Chart-2, No. 11), 5) killed when fighting with wild animals or while hunting (Chart-2, No. 59) and 6) sacrificed his life for the well being of his clan people or his master (Chart-2, No. 22). The village must have comprised of several families probably having close clan linkages (Chart-2, No. 62).

The skirmishes can be understood as a fight for pasture lands, since land at the time was mainly meant for grazing cattle. Land was owned commonly while cattle could

have been private property owned by a family or a smaller tribal unit consisting of few families. However, when there was a threat to their cattle by cattle raiders from neighbouring village or tribal groups, the villagers might have come together to protect their cattle. In the herostones the words *anirai* (Chart-2, No. 47) and *thoru* (Chart-2, Nos. 37, 38 and 45) refer to herds. Similarly the *thoruppusal* is referred to mean the fight over cattle, the cattle raid (Chart-2, Nos. 7 and 10).¹³ As a basic means of subsistence, *anirai* (cattle), needed to be protected or to be raided. Both cases necessitated the involvement of heroes. In fact, it was a good opportunity to prove their skill and bravery in fighting. If they were successful, they could live with high heroic status and probably could enjoy more privileges. If they were killed after a gallant fight they would be remembered and honored in the history of the village or clan by setting up a stone for their glorious act, thereby their claims to immortal fame would remain forever. More often the herostones were set up by the community and members of the hero's family.¹⁴ In certain cases, the entire village formed together to set up stones so as to honour the hero. The portrayal of the hero carved in the stone left certain clues to study the prevailing social system. Most often heroes have been depicted in fighting attire, holding a bow and arrow, long and short swords, big dagger and small knife, etc. (Chart-2, Nos. 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 15). Some heroes have been engraved with high armaments, like a huge bow and arrow (Chart-2, No. 68). Obviously, it indicates his high rank and status in society. *Pulikuttikkal* is a category of herostones that was put up for the sake of those heroes who gallantly fought with tigers. In such stones, the honored man is seen killing the ferocious tigers. The appearance of a buffalo and a toddy pot indicates a raid for a buffalo and the enjoyment after successful accomplishment (Chart-2, No. 45). There is also another category of glorious stones, locally known as *navakanda sirpam*, depicting the self-sacrifice of head (so life) or part of body by the honored hero in favour of his clan or village. In such depiction, the hero cuts his head or a part of body that he offers (Chart-2, Nos. 63, 64 and 65).

All that one could infer from the herostones is a well-rooted sedentary pastoralism, village settlement of early tribes, clan segments and the local lineage formation. The

¹³ N. Natana Kasinathan gives different terms, which are used in the herostones for various kinds of cattle. *Torukondu* was a general term for cattle lifting: *torn* (if it is a cow); *mart toru* (if it is sheep); *erumaitoru* (if it is a buffalo); and *korruru* and *kanru kalai* (general terms for cattle), see *Hero-Stones in Tamilnadu*, Arun Publications, Madras, 1978, p. 6.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

early social groups, like *kurumbar*, *eynar*, *aihiyar*, *vettuvar*, *kuravar*, *vedar*, *malavar*, etc., referred to in the classical literatures still continued their traditional way of life and practiced divergent forms of subsistence, such as hunting, herding and shifting cultivation. Tribe names like *athiar*, *vadugar* and *vettuvar* are mentioned in the herostones (see Chart-2, No. 35). Among these early tribes the *vettuva*, which had a substantial population, emerged as a powerful tribe and perhaps all other marginalized tribes would have become part and subunits of the *vettuva* tribe. Though internally segmented, they could have shared certain common indigenous identities without losing their larger tribal affinity. Similarly, by this time the *vettuv*as themselves might have been divided into several segmented clans and occupational groups. Each group maintained its own local lineage attached to one common ancestor or connecting to powerful chiefs or kings, so as to link their identity with lunar or solar lineage divisions. Though there is no authentic reference to trace the tribal names of these people who figure in the herostones, a comparison of the previous classical literatures and the later stone inscriptions of the tenth century would show that these indigenous social groups could be affiliated to the *vettuva* community. At the end of the classical period the *vettuva* emerged as a single large community in the hilly region and similarly there are many a stone inscription of the later period, which refer to the *vettuva* donation to *temples* in the form of land and money. Even the oral traditions like *annamar kathaikal*, which are still prevalent in the form of story telling and folk drama as a part of local cult tradition, narrate the story of the long standing rivalries between indigenous *vettuvar* (referred as hunters and less civilized) and the immigrant *vellalar* (agriculturalists and civilized).

In the beginning, the *vettuvar* were nomadic hunters, they then became semi-nomadic pastoral-cum-hunters and ultimately they switched over to being settled pastoral-cum-agriculturalists (agropastoralists). Therefore, at that time, there were different occupational groups, like cattle breeders, hunters, cultivators, chiefs, warriors, labourers, etc. They were intra-dependant with one another and their status in the social system was based on the demand for their skill and their contribution to society. And the features of heroic culture were part of this pastoralism. Though agriculture was practised from the early period, it did not dominate the socio-economic relations of the indigenous people. Towards the tenth century, a smaller section of *vettuva* tribe would have taken up cultivation as a full time occupation. Contemporary references, recording the land

and its utility for cultivation are available right from the beginning of ninth century. However, land came under frequent reference only after the tenth century.

The early farmers might have been a disadvantaged group within the pastoral mode of livelihood. Those who were not able to own larger herds might have looked for alternative form of subsistence, and a little later, they came to be known as *vettuva koundar*.¹⁵ The introduction of agriculture as a full-time occupation created a split in the social system and there were social structural differences between people: those who traditionally followed the cattle and grain mode of production; and those who had recently switched over to full time cultivation. Nevertheless, the coexistence of herding and farming did not affect the persisting socio-cultural system, at least, till the tenth century CE.¹⁶ Rather it was beneficial to the communities since it provided them with an alternative form of subsistence and they could exchange their respective surpluses with each other.

The structural differentiation in society was further complicated during the tenth century CE when there was immigration from different parts of south India. Though the region is situated in a bordering area, it never remained isolated. Its cattle and mineral potential brought a wide range of contacts with other parts of the subcontinent, right from the beginning of the early historical period. Moreover, there had been constant fighting between the outside rulers to strengthen and extend their power over it. And finally the political scenario, which prevailed there was not much resistant to immigration. In such a society where the power and prestige of higher rank holders (the elite or chief, who had control [minimal?] over his kinsmen) was primarily estimated by the amount of herds owned. The settlement of new agriculturist from outside did not pose a threat to their independence or status. All these different variables worked in one or the other way in the settlement of new agricultural groups, and it was followed by different occupational practitioners. The *vellalar* who are believed to have introduced

¹⁵ M. Raja Sekara Thankamani, *Kongil Vettuvār* (Vettuvār in Kongu), *Avanam Karutharanku Malar* [Avanam Seminar Papers] Tamilnadu Archaeological Society, Tanjavur, p. 138.

¹⁶ Indeed, the prolonged tension between the people of the plains and highlands was not only a phenomenon of post-Sangam period, but in the Sangam period as well. For example, M.G.S. Narayanan in his study on cattle raiders of the Sangam Age points out that the conflict between the violent cattle raiders of the highlands and the peaceful cattle keepers of the plains could have formed part and parcel of everyday life in the Sangam Age'. He further states 'the conflict between the cattle keepers of the plains and the cattle raiders of the highlands resulting in the military domination of the latter over the former explains a good deal of early history in South India', see 'Cattle Raiders in the Sangam Age', in *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 38th Session, Bhubaneswar, 1978, p. 77.

irrigated agriculture in the uplands were immigrants from various plain regions of south India.¹⁷ The new migrant peasants introduced new methods of cultivation particularly canal and well irrigation. In course of time, it subordinated the existing cattle economy, instigated more agricultural production, brought mixed cultural practices and further extended the stratification in society.¹⁸ In brief, the influx of new communities at least eased, the transformation in the existing pastoral social structure.

The transfer and interaction between two culturally different communities brought in them a great level of assimilation. However, predictably some sections of the early inhabitants who resisted the cultural diffusion kept themselves away from the emerging social order. It is said that the status and condition of those *vettuvār* who were not integrated into the agricultural community steadily deteriorated.¹⁹ Therefore, the expansion of agrarian settlements and its consequent tension has been seen as the conflict between the indigenous pastoral *vettuvār* and the agricultural *vellalar*. According to Rajanna 'the *vettuvār* were overwhelmed by the immigrant *vellalar* who established their social and political supremacy in the Kongu Nadu in the 7th century. The dominance of the *vettuvār* waned between the 7th and 9th centuries while a new culture introduced by the *vellalar* took root and spread in what was once an exclusively *vettuvār* territory'.²⁰

The concept of a temple within the agro-pastoral society was yet to be evolved in this period. In the beginning, the herostones were worshipped with certain rituals and ceremonies. It was considered that the spirit of the hero would remain in the stone. The heroes, who took pride in making their living at the edge of a sword, were revered for their activity and consequently became divine cults. Therefore, they were looked upon as the guardian of the village providing protection from external attack of cattle and pasture land. Some of these herostones have been collected from later temples indicating

¹⁷ In the later period some early indigenous tribes began to involve in agricultural activity and they were also identified with *vellala*. Therefore, the *vellala* community not only consisted of the immigrant people, but some section of indigenous people as well. M. Raja Sekara Thankamani, *Kongil Vettuvār*, op. cit., p. 138.

¹⁸ According to M. Arokiyaswami, there were three waves of social penetration in Kongu. The third wave, which is our concern here, was during the thirteenth century CE when many more communities such as the *vellalas*, the *kaikolas* and the *chetties* began to settle in Kongu, see *Kongu Country*, University of Madras, Madras, 1936, p. 260.

¹⁹ B. Rajanna, *Salem Encyclopedia: A Cultural and Historical Dictionary of Salem District, Tamilnadu*, Institute of Kongu Studies, Salem, 1992, p. 344.

²⁰ Ibid.

their linkage. The early practice of performing regular worship at the site of a herostone was continued for a considerable period of time and with 'the passage of time some of these monuments (herostones) were transformed into small shrines or the nucleus of larger temple'.²¹

Apart from worshipping the human personalities, who lost their lives for the sake of their society and tribe, there is hardly any clue to any form of folk religious belief and practice, not even for worshipping certain natural objects like spirits of vegetation, personifying the physical life of earth, sun, etc., which has been the case in a number of tribal societies. The folk gods were illustrious human persons, who belonged to their own community, their ancestors and kinsmen, rather than anthropomorphized divinities. Similarly, it can also be argued that established religions such as Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism did not penetrate deep into pastoral society, despite ample evidences that show the traces of these religions.

Among them Jainism was not only the earliest but also most widely prevalent. The close connection between western Tamil Nadu and other Karnataka regions, its strategic location in which trade and trader activity was high, and the attempts of Karnataka rulers to establish their control over the region can be said to have facilitated the spread of Jainism in the uplands of Tamil Nadu. Since early days, both Buddhism and Jainism enjoyed royal support and they were patronized by rulers such as the Rattas and Gangas, who exercised influence among the local chiefs of the region to some extent. There are Jain caves throughout the region dating back from first century. These caves have paintings, stone sculptures of *thirthankars*, Jain saint beds, Tamil Brahmi scripts, etc.²² However it is not certain how far Jainism made its impact on local people. In fact, it did not bring any visible changes in the pastoral society. Rather it would have been confined to certain elite groups like chiefs, traders, etc., and did not penetrate the daily life of the common man. Perhaps liberally donating to Jain saints and having relation (spiritual) with them could be a status or prestige mark to chiefs or other elites so as to distinguish them from ordinary folk. Interestingly in certain places, memorial stones were erected for the Jain saints, an indication that their burial had been done by following the local practices. The Aivarmalai caves have several sculptures of Jain

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 79.

*thirthankars*²³. These images have been sculptured on the face of the rocks. However, we do not come across such kind of grants in favour of Jainism in the later inscriptions from the tenth century. Jainism was gradually weakened towards the ninth century, giving way to Hinduism.

The sculptures in the Namakkal caves are the earliest evidence of Hinduism. Despite its late beginning, it easily penetrated into society on a large scale within a short period. The settlements of new agrarian migrants from the plain regions of Tamil Nadu and the spread of the Bhakti movement were significant factors that accelerated the process of Hinduization during the medieval period. A process of high level of temple construction started during the eleventh century and enormously developed during the succeeding centuries.

Nevertheless, being a forest region, upland Tamil Nadu was always an ideal place for wandering saints, particularly those who belonged to Jainism and Buddhism. And similarly, not being part of any established state, the people were at liberty to follow their traditional ritual life without any compulsion to adopt the state religion. Therefore, the point that needs to be emphasized is that the traces of these religions cannot be interpreted to show that they were being practised by the common people. It would be appropriate to see them as references to the wandering saints who preferred to live as exiles in the forest.

3. Subsistence Economy

The pastoral or herding economy began as an ecological adaptation, when the technological developments were not upto the level of controlling the upland water for irrigation. Tilling the rocky mountainous fields and clearing the thick forest would have demanded investment of more time and labour power in which the region was deficient at that point of time. On the other hand, availability of vast pastureland and forest regions highly facilitated the autochthonous development of the herding economy. Cultivation of millets was also a part of the subsistence economy, but practiced less extensively. There was an obsession for pastoralism as it got deeply enrooted in the social life of the people. Herding of goat, sheep, cow, buffalo, etc., was highly linked with the status of the individual. Therefore, accumulation of cattle is not only a

²³ Ibid., p. 111.

maximizer of wealth but also of status. Cattle in the herostones are identified by different names like *thoru*, *nirai*, *kali*, etc., (Chart-2, Nos. 23, 47, 37 and 55). *Anirai* refers to herds of cows. There are also reference to tanks for the purpose of water for the cattle (Chart-2, No. 41). Since in a pastoral society the wealth of a person or a tribe group was counted on the basis of the number of cattle owned, they were used as currency for the purpose of exchange. In the herding economy, every household was a production and consumption unit, where the surplus and demand were exchanged at their own risk.

Land or territory was owned communally, but there was private ownership of cattle. The fight between two neighbouring chiefs or villages was motivated by accumulation of cattle. Similarly, wars were also waged over the possession of pasture, when there was great scarcity for pasture, particularly at the time of drought. Evidence of private ownership of land, particularly for cultivation and habitation sites, was found in the inscriptions from eleventh century, more frequently after the thirteenth century.

Rich cattle breeders like the *ponnandiar*, *ponmothandr* and *porkovanar* (Chart-2, Nos. 19 and 20) employed labour from among the poor breeders. For example, most of the herostones were to honour the *sevakar* (servant) (Chart-2, Nos. 20, 26 and 31), who was killed in the cattle raids. However, the economic dependence of poor cattle breeders on the rich is less since livestock are not fixed assets, as they could be raided by others or individual families could develop their cattle wealth by their own effort. A wealthy pastoralist was also supposed to receive the help of small livestock holders during the period of common threats to their cattle (like raid, tribal warfare, etc.). Therefore, in the pastoral economy, economic domination of a few on the rest holds little value.

Dry land farming had been practiced marginally right from the beginning of the early historical period. The megalithic findings also throw light on agriculture.²⁴ When some disadvantaged pastoralist (probably those who were not able to do well in herding) tried to shift their occupation, it led to a change in the economy. Millet cultivation might have been taken up full time by certain sections of society. The indigenous agrarian development within the region was indeed slow involving primitive methods of irrigation and crop selection. Therefore, the expansion and acceleration of agrarian production was largely because of external contacts and it was achieved through various

²⁴ K. Rajan, *Archaeology of Tamil Nadu (Kongu Country)*, Book India Publishing Co, Delhi, 1994, p. 147.

ways. Cross cultural interaction, transhumance, diffusion, new settlements, etc., were certain causative factors, which precipitated agrarian activities. The consistent attempts of rulers from the plains and the encampment of traders also initiated an active cultural interaction. There are few references in the herostones with regard to construction of tanks (Chart-2, No. 41), but they seem to have indicated cattle rather than cultivation. In fact the large scale agrarian activity needed well-developed irrigational arrangements involving huge investment of labour and material. Being a less populated area, the early agricultural practice in the upland remained simply rain-fed farming. Land became a valuable commodity only when agricultural production began to dominate the basic subsistence resources. It was also a transition from cattle as a marker of socio-political rank to that of land.

Despite being left with limited resources to study the role of artisan and craftsmen in the existing socio-economic structure, the basic subsistence activities of the inhabitants could not be carried out in the absence of specialized artisan groups. Iron, gold and silver melting, weaving, carpentry, stone work, etc., were apparently in practice. The depictions in herostones show that the human personalities wore ornaments, such as bangles, beads, rings, toe rings and some sorts of ornaments on the wrist (see Chart-2, Nos. 18, 39 and 68). Several excavation reports at later megalithic habitation mounds reveal the use of silver, iron and other precious stone objects.²⁵ The herostone figures dressed with lower and upper garments (Chart-2, No. 26) attest to the prevalent occupation of weaving.

There must have been a flow among various basic subsistence resources involving some sort of exchange system. The surplus in dairy products and meat of cattle-rich areas shifted to grain and dry land farming units. It might have needed the involvement of middlemen or traders. There are quite a number of references to the activities of traders in the upland and other parts of western Tamil Nadu. The establishment of Jain sites in various parts of the region can be understood in the context of trader mobility. Traders were the sole supporters of the Jain saints as evidenced in the cave inscriptions.²⁶ Most of the herostones have been collected from alongside the trade routes. The topographical locations of these herostones is said to have formed a straight

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 92-103.

²⁶ S. Raju, *Kongunadum Samanamum*, op. cit., p. 107.

line across the region, which is most probably a trade route.²⁷ However, there are no records relating to long distance (foreign) trade like that of early Roman trade. The political instability and the transition in the pattern of the subsistence system to the expansion of agriculture can be held partly responsible. The early long distance trade was carried out when a full-fledged political centralization was absent and there was less economic intervention of political elites. The sustainability of commercial development would require a centralized political system to manage or regulate the exchange activities; therefore, the breakdown of long distance trade with the Romans was inevitable.

The exchange system of the early period, which was mostly in prestigious goods, did not have the involvement of commoners. It was elite sponsored, a status marker and a source for power. But during the post-Roman trade period, we see that the use of these goods had a downward flow to commoners. The herostones figures attest their use at the local level. The disconnection of trade exchange with Rome did not stop the production of such prestigious goods since there was a growing demand. Similarly, it would have further accentuated the intra-regional level of exchange system as seen in the context of Jain establishments.

4. Power Hierarchy

The region is situated in a strategic place encircled by territories of the Pallavas, Cheras, Pandiyas, Gangas and the Cholas in various points of historical time. There were consistent interventions from these states in order to extend their authority over the region by various means. Attempts to win over the support of these local pastoral chiefs were mainly governed by the need to draw men for their troops and establish agrarian and brahmanical settlements. Another motive was to facilitate the mercantile activities and the inflow of merchandises into their region. Since the states were always engaged in fighting, there was a great need for the role of the chiefs and their men, who at the time were known for their bravery in warfare and lived in a kind of heroic obsession. On the other hand, the hereditary chiefs, influenced by the their neighbouring states, tried to imitate them and acted as rulers of these states to legitimize their power within their territories. Bearing the titles of these rulers was supposed to be one way of imitation. It

²⁷ S. Krishnamurti, *Nadukarkal*, (Herostones), Meyyappan Pathippakam, Chennai, 2004, p. 39.

made at least two impacts: first, it showed their close relationship with these states, a high and powerful elites relationship, which the commoners could not think of; and second, it brought a genealogical linkage with mythical ancestors, to show legitimate power by birth.

Some herostone messages, particularly those collected from Dharmapuri regions begin with the regnal years of the Pallava and Ganga rulers. It shows the acknowledgement of their power by the local chiefs. But how the external political power operated at the local level in far off frontier regions needs a detailed study. In the light of herostones, there were occasional invasions of the state rulers over the region (Chart-2, No. 12). But none of these rulers conquered the whole region and incorporated it into their territories. The strong warrior and independent nature of the hereditary chiefs, the pastoralist way of life, little interest in agrarian production, etc., were factors that restricted the possibility of assimilation with the states. Apart from the rulers from outside, there were at least two levels of political centres that existed within the region, at the village (*ur*) and supra village (*nadu*) (Chart-2, Nos. 20, 21 and 22). Most of the chiefs who figured in the herostones were in these categories.

In the process of early state formation, legitimization of power was achieved through multiple ways that include establishing state religion, state deities, state priesthood, state values, ideology, state myth and legend, state ritual and ceremony for investiture in office, veneration of state sacrifice, etc., propaganda and establishing celibacy.²⁸ This mechanism was invariably seen in all early states, which depended highly on religion as an effective tool in legitimizing the authority of the ruling class and creating a public sphere in which culturally and socially varying communities could be united by showing the social distance and the high culture of rulers. In the context of south India, the process was initiated by the Pallavas and later effectively followed by the Chola state. However, in the case of the upland, the mechanism of projecting the state religion as an instrument to unify the varying social groups remained impossible for a considerable period. Being a small arid zone segmented into multiple sub-regions, it was controlled and ruled by the chiefs who had direct kin relations with their subjects.

²⁸ Conald V. Kurtz emphasizes this aspect in his 'Legitimation of Early Inchoate States', in Henri J.M. Claessen and S. Peter Skalnik (eds), *The Study of the State*, Mouton Publications, The Hague, 1981, p. 185.

Having hereditary interest in warfare the heroic activities brought them not only fame, but also it was a method to legitimize their power. With this ceaseless warfare and strong tribal affinity, there was less possibility for any kind of political unification.

Apart from this uncertain political situation, the social development was more responsible for not providing a favourable condition for the development of the state. One can see in the history of this region, even during the medieval period, no chieftain family remained in ruling status for a considerable time span. During the classical period, except Adiyaman whose son was also said to have been a chief, none of the chieftain families continued to survive for two generations. Even the political situation during the post-classical period was not marked with any development of state or larger chiefdom. On the contrary, what indeed had happened was that the ideology of heroism further divulged deep into the local level and was invariably practiced by the local communities. The numerous herostone inscriptions of the sixth to tenth century CE ascribe to the tension and ceaseless warfare among these local kin groups. The descendent of major tribes of the classical period, *athiyar*, *kongar* and *vettuvār* might have continued their authority in different parts of the region. However, these early major tribes were segmented into several local lineage groups consisting of a small number of families. A few herostones are now cited to understand the relationships between different levels of political power.

1. During the fourteenth regnal year of Kovisai Vinna Paruman, Ganga Araisar of Tagadur was attacked by Vanaperumaraisar and Vanaperumarisar was killed (Chart-2, No. 1) (It was a fight between two supra-village level chiefs (*araisars*). Kovisai Vinna Paruman was Pallava ruler, outside the region).
2. During the fourteenth regnal year of Kovisai Sinkavina, servant of Perumpanaraisar Makkal, Saththappavanar was killed in a local skirmish (Chart-2, No. 4). (A fight between local chiefs, *araisar* was a title that was generally used by local chiefs at the supra village level).
3. Palasiriar's son Ciruppaduvannar undertook a raid in which Sathankal of Pilaya village of Puya *nadu* was killed (Chart-2, No. 7). (Cattle raid at local level, Palasiriar was a local chief, *ur* and *nddu* divisions have been mentioned).
4. During the regnal years of Simha Vishnu, there was a fight between Montaikal Kumarasatiyar and Kappaluru Andavan at Mokkaipadi in which the former was killed (Chart-2, No. 9). (The fight was between the local chiefs. The chiefs bore titles such as *athiyar* and *andavan*).
5. Son of Gangathiaraisar of Kovurnadu fought with Singavinnar, when his servant Athimparruaraisar's son Nattikatitayar was killed, (Chart-2, No. 12). (This was a fight between a village level chief and an outside ruler).

Gangathiarisar was a local chief (*athiaraisar*), while Singavinnar was probably a Pallava king, the title *athiaraisar* was born by the chiefs who were powerful at the local level, while *araisar* were more powerful than the *athiaraisar*.

6. During the fourteenth regnal year of Mayendra Paruman, Perumpanathiaraisar and Singaparumathiaraisar fought with each other, when the latter's servant Achchura Panil was killed (Chart-2, No.13). (Fight between local level chiefs, Perumpana and Singaparuma were *athiaraisars*).

7. During the fifteenth regnal year of Mayendra Parumar one of the servants of Kadanthaikal fought with Putuppalli. Yerumathikari was killed in that fight (Chart-2, No. 14). (A fight between local level chiefs, the chiefs did not have any titles).

8. During the time of Mahendravarman's rule, Yeran, son of Puravar Perrandan Kompulikal was killed in a cattle raid (see Chart-2, No. 17). (Cattle raid at local level).

9. Son of Uzhmunukkan servant of Vanaparuma Araisar was killed along with his servant (Chart-2, No. 31). (Both the local chief and his servants have been killed in the skirmish).

10. During the rule of Mahendravarman, the village Kuppai of Mevanadu was attacked by Gangaraisar and the cattle of the village were raided. During this incident, Kavithi Vadukan was killed when he attempted to protect the cattle (Chart-2, No. 11). (Cattle raid and retaliatory raid at local level. The chief was *araisar*).

The suffixes with personal names found in the herostones clearly indicate three levels of political power. *Araisar* (Chart-2, Nos. 30 and 31), *athiaraisar* (Chart-2, Nos. 12 and 13), *mutharaiyar*, (see Chart-2, No. 44), *ilavaraisar* (Chart-2, No. 35), *parumaraaisar* (Chart-2, No. 39 and 48) *parumar* (Chart-2, Nos. 49 and 31), *palasiriar* (Chart-2, No. 2), *peruman* (Chart-2, No. 31), etc., are best examples for such suffixes that denote power and status. Among them, *athiaraisar*, *ilavaraisar* and *parumaraaisar* were first level power holders. They were chiefs of the segmented units of certain major ethnic units. These subunits, consisting of several families, were perhaps not larger than a village. The leadership within the subunits needed to have certain requirements, or rather, certain requirements were created ideologically so as to keep the status unequal to the other kinsmen and the commoners. The close blood proximity to the one who was on the top of the local genealogical pattern was one such requirement. The second requirement was cattle wealth. It was a marker of both status and power. However, these political elites might not have any specific right to intervene in the subsistence activities of the kinsmen. More importantly, they had not yet emerged as a full-fledged ruling class detaching themselves completely from the production activities. Rather, they always needed to have the cooperation of their kinsmen to carry out their own

production. Therefore, in a sense, they had to encourage the subsistence activities of kinsmen and give them protection from external threats. As long as he was able to maintain his production higher than other kinsmen and to give protection from the external threats, he was able to sustain his chieftainship. In a sense, they were 'group oriented chiefdoms' (units) in which the groups' (kinsmen) interest was primary to that of the individual (the political elite, the chief). And finally, the leadership was required to have a strong physical and mental strength. Leadership was always involved in organizing warfare, battle and skirmishes. If the chief was afraid of fighting, his leadership would not be desired by his kinsmen. In case of natural threats like drought, flood, etc., weakening the subsistence activities of the kinsmen, the local chiefs needed to organize plunder or cattle raids on the neighbouring units resulting in fierce skirmishes. Similarly, if such attacks came from other units, the chief needed to organize a retaliatory attack (Chart-2, Nos. 58, 60 and 61). The chiefs and his kinsmen could accumulate their wealth by plunder and cattle raids. At the time of cattle raids, the chief mobilized labour from his kinsmen and employed them in battle. It seems that more than being a coordinator of the raids, he had to personally involve and fight standing shoulder to shoulder with his kinsmen (Chart-2, No. 31). For this double role he could enjoy material and political privileges. He could also maintain his social and political status by redistributing of wealth, giving feasts and gifts, showing access to high ruling elites and religious persons, planting herostones for those who were killed in the raids and skirmishes and facilitating the trade contracts on the surplus in the unit.

The Panars, Kadavas, Adiyamans, Nolambas, Mutharaiars, and several others were the chiefs who come under the second category. They represented a larger ethnic group within which there were several segmented lineage units under the dominance of local chiefs. They were also hereditary chiefs descending from the classical period and had their genealogical patterns connected with the lunar and solar family. They were generally identified in the herostones with the suffixes of *mutharaiar*, *peruman*, *parumar*, *araisar*, etc., (Chart-2, Nos. 12, 13, 31 and 44). The power relation between the local hereditary chiefs and these second level leaders is not clear from the available sources. But their authority was acknowledged by local leader since the herostones set up by the local chiefs mention the name of these chiefs (Chart-2, Nos. 4, 12 and 17). Evidently, there had been continued war among them and sometime with the chiefs at the local level and with the outside rulers (for example, rulers of the Pallava and the

Ganga dynasties). Generally, they maintained cordial relationship with the states, which was also a status marker so as to keep their superiority with the local chiefs. Attachment with Jain, Buddhist and Hindu religious personality also might have been another way of showing high status. They perhaps would have played some sort of managerial role by controlling the subunits, but their economic intervention in the local subsistence activities was very less or absent since the economic practices heavily depended on agro-pastoral way of production in which even the local chiefs did not have much role to play. They tried to adopt the state model developed in plain regions like that of the Pallavas and the Gangas. They bore titles of these rulers. For example, *paruman*, *varman*, etc., were titles of the Pallava rulers, which were adopted by the local pastoral chiefs (Chart-2, Nos. 31 and 43). The hierarchical differentiation between these two levels of political elites was difficult to distinguish since they did similar duty and were highly independent in their decision-making role. However, there was always acknowledgement of their power by local chiefs. Therefore, by whatever means, they were the central directors and managers of the chiefly principality.

Towards the beginning of the eleventh century, there were some significant changes in the socio-economic and political formation. A chief family, known as the *konattan* chiefs, managed to overpower the existing other groups of chiefs and established a full-fledged state system by adopting the method and nature of the Cholas state, which at that time was not only efficient in its functioning but powerful among the different south Indian states. In fact, the emergence of state system became possible owing to the developments in socio-economic life. The pastoral obsession loosened its hold and the cattle economy was abated to secondary importance. The great degree of inclination towards irrigated agriculture promising a standard surplus production created a class of rulers. As dependability of the people on the state increased (especially for irrigational and trading arrangements), the space for economic intervention of the state also widened. The forthcoming chapter examines the nature and structure of the state society.

Chart-II: Hero Stones (6th to 10th CE)

No.	Period	Place	Subject	Message	Key words	Portrayal	References
1	Pallava	Pappampadi	skirmish	battle between Gangaraisar and Vanaperumaraisar in which the latter was killed.	<i>perumaraisar, gangraisar, prumar</i>	-	P.148 ⁱ
2	Simmavarman 20th regnal year	Uttankarai Taluk, Puliyanur	cattle lifting	Maran, son of Palasiriyar, was killed in cattle raiding	<i>alvar, palasiriyar, thoru,</i>	-	P.149
3	Simmavarman	Uttankarai Taluk, Puliyanur	-	-	<i>parumar, venādu</i>	Hero with sword in left hand and an armor in his right hand.	P.69
4	Simmavishnu, 563 CE	Koraiyāru	skirmish	Pakan, servant of Saththapparavanar, son of Perumpanaaraisar's was killed in skirmish	<i>paruman, perumpanaaraisar, pusai</i>	Hero holds a sword and an armor	P.155
5	Simmavishnu,	Koraiyāru	skirmish	-	<i>pusai senru pattan</i>	hero holds a dagger and armor	P.155
6	Simmavishnu,	Koraiyaru	skirmish	-	<i>pusali pattan</i>	Hero holds a arrow and a short sword	P.155
7	Simavishnu	Uttankarai, Puliyanur	cattle lifting	Palasiriyar's son Ciruppaduvannar undertook a raid in which Sthankal of Pilaya village of Puya nādu was killed	<i>pālasiriyar, pusai, thoru</i>	Hero standing straight holding dagger and armor	P.156
8	Simmavishnu 575 CED	Uttankarai, Nathiyannur	skirmish	battle between the ruler of Mokkaipadi and Mainthaikal, ruler Koulakappurai, in which the latter's son was killed.	battle between two villages	A soldier	P.156
9	Simmavishnu	Yellapudaiyanpatti	skirmish	A fight between Monthaikal Kumarasathiyaru and Andavar of Kappalur at Mokkaipadi, in which the former was killed	-	-	P.157
10	Simmavishnu, 577 CE	Uttankarai, Kanampatti	recovering cattle	Vathiselavan was killed in cattle raiding	<i>thorupor, ānirai</i>	The soldier hold a sword and an armor	P.157
11	598 CE	Uttankarai, Nāduppatti	cattle lifting	Kuppaiur Kangaiyarasar waged a cattle raid in which Kavithi Vadukan was killed	<i>ūr, thoru, thoruvividuvithu-pattan</i>	Hero with a short sword and long sword	P.163

No.	Period	Place	Subject	Message	Key words	Portrayal	References
12	Simmavishnu	Arur, Thinnahalli	skirmish	Son of Gangathiyraisar of Kovur Nādu fought with Singavinnar (Simmavishnu?). in which his son of his servant, Athiparruraisar was killed	<i>āthiyarasar, araisar</i>	-	P.158
13	Simmavishnu	Makkanoor	skirmish	between Singaparumathiyarasar and Perumpana athiaraisar. In which former son's servant Achurapanil was killed.	<i>āthiyaraisar,</i>	-	P.159
14	Mahentravarman	Palincharahalli	skirmish	fight between servant of Kadanthaikal and Puthupalli, when Yerumathikari was killed	-	Hero with a short sword and a bow. A cover for sword is also seen	P.160
15	6th AD	Erode		-	-	-	P.433
16	6th AD	Erode	fighting with tiger	-	-	-	P.433
17	Mahentravarman 7 th regnal year	Arur, Kathirampatti	cattle lifting	Yeran, son of Perrandan Kompulikan was killed while fighting with Kankathi Araisan	<i>āraisan, perramantan</i>	Hero with warrior attire	P.162
18	6 th or 7 th AD	Arur, Kathirampatti	cattle lifting	two brothers were killed while lifting cattle	<i>thoru,</i>	Portraits of two heroes	P.163
19	604 AD	Arur, Mondukkuzhi	battle	Porkovanar, son of Kadikavinjinar was killed in a fighting with Ponmotanar, son of Veeravannaraisar	<i>pon, ka, arisar</i>	Hero with a sword and a bow	P.167
20	604 AD	Arur, MondukKuzhi	battle	between Porkovanar and Ponmathanar in which former servant was killed	<i>nādu</i>	Hero with a knife and a bow	P.167
21	605 AD	Uttankarai, Pottankottai	cattle lifting	Nanjuni armakan korradai of Kovur nādu was killed in cattle lifting	<i>nādu</i>	-	P.168
22	610 AD	Puliyannur, Vedyappavanam	cattle lifting	son of Palasirikar, Veerakar was killed, the fight was at Kattaiur of Meevenādu	<i>ur, nādu, thoru</i>	Hero with sword and bow	P.169
23	608	Dharmapur, Panyamkulam	cattle lifting		<i>pon (cattle)</i>	Hero with a bow and arrow	P.169

No.	Period	Place	Subject	Message	Key words	Portrayal	References
24	Pallavas	Ponnakaram	cattle lifting	the hero was killed while recovering the lifted cattle	<i>sevakar, parumar, thoru</i>	Hero with short a sword and a bow	P.177
25	7th AD	Palinjirappalli	battle	Two people were killed in a battle		Hero with bow	P.178
26	Iswaravarman	Arur, Kookkuppatti	battle	between kanthavannathi araisar and Gangar, the formers servant was killed	<i>athirariasar</i>	Hero on horse back holding armor and lance	P.191
27	Iswaravarman	Arur	battle	in the same battle another servant, Paramthayar's son Kannamaran, was killed	<i>sevakar, parumar</i>	Hero with bow and short sword	P.192
28	Echurvarman	Anumanthapuram	battle	a servant, Puttur Sattan was killed in a battle	<i>sevakar, parumar</i>	Hero with a bow and a short sword fighting with their enemy	P.193
29	Echurvarman	Anumanthapuram	battle	another servant, kadunko was killed	<i>sevakar, parumar</i>	Hero with a bow and a short sword fighting with their enemy	P.193
30	7th AD	Arur, Uttanpattithanda	battle	between Venmankala araisar and Panayenathi, latter servant was killed	<i>araisar, athi araisar, yenathi</i>	Hero with sword and armor	P.193
31	Panar	Arur, Pappampatti	battle	Vanaparuma Araisar's servant Uzhmunukkan, who was ruling vijayamankalam was killed along with his servant	<i>yenathi, araisar, parumar</i>	Portraits of two heroes	P.215
32	Arimirai Paruman	Uttankarai, Vellampatti	battle	Mavalivanrayar's servant was killed. Land was donated to hero's family	<i>paruman</i>	Hero with a dagger and a bow	P.217
33	Panar	Arur, alamelupuram	battle	Perum Panathi Arayar's servant	<i>panar, Athiaraiyar</i>	Hero's portrait	P.217
34	8th Ad	Arur, Kailapuram	cattle lifting	Arutirayar tried to cover the cattle of Kanthavanathiraiyar, when Amarneeliyar's servant recovered the cattle and got killed		Hero with a sword and a bow	P.221
35	7th AD	Arur, Cinnankuppam	battle	between Kangar makkal Veerasenathiyar and Vettuva Ilavarayar, the former was killed	<i>vettuva ilavariyar</i>	-	P.221

No.	Period	Place	Subject	Message	Key words	Portrayal	References
36	701	Uttankarai	battle	Mavalivanarayan ruled Darmapuri during the Sivamara Paruman period. Indiran, ruler of Rastrakuda, waged a war. When Maravanar servant was killed	-	Hero with a sword and a bow. Two arrows run through his body.	P.228
37	9th AD	Arur, Cinnankuppam	battle	Pritivirayar of Puramalai nādu was engaged in a battle when his servant Serupachadaiyan was killed	<i>thour, nādu</i>		P.221
38	8th AD	Pennkaram, Indur		Son of Nodayan was killed	-	Hero with a sword	P.221
39	8th Ad	Uttankarai, Meyyantippatti	cattle lifting	Two people were killed in cattle raid	<i>perumanaraisar, thoru,</i>	Portraits of two heroes	P.222
40	Sivamaran	Uttankarai, Varathampatti	battle	Kantavannthi araiyar's son was killed	<i>araiyar</i>	Hero with a sword	P.223
41	Sivamaran, 726	Arur, Kannappanur	battle	Vanikachadaiyanar, servant of Theliyaniorar son of Kanthavanathi Araisar of Puramalai nādu was killed	<i>anaiyadininru</i>	Hero with sword and a bow	
42	8 or 9th AD	Arur, Navalai	battle	when Rashtrakuda ruler Intharaian destroyed Vadavallur, Poongudi Vadukan killed his horse and got killed himself	-	Hero with sword. A horse is seen beside the hero	P.225
43	Sivamaran	Uttankarai	battle	When Kantavannathiraiyar Puramalai nādu, Vanaperman Koodal Yerintha Ganru Sathappannar Padaiththan Kotti Unni was killed	-	-	P.226
44	Sri Prushan, 8th AD	Papparapatti	cattle lifting	When Arunkalvar waged a cattle raid at Perunpana, against Mutharasar Gangaraisaral, in which Nochisattan was killed	<i>thoru, muttraisar, sattan</i>		P.227
45	Kattanai Paruman	PaduthanKottai	cattle lifting	Kilakanpadi, servant of Sinkaparumarayar of Kovur Nādu was killed	<i>thoru</i>	Hero and a toddy pot	P.227
46	Kattanai Paruman	PaduthanKottai	cattle lifting	Nansuni Armakan Korradai was killed while recovering the cattle		Hero with a sword	P.227

No.	Period	Place	Subject	Message	Key words	Portrayal	References
47	Sri Prusha	Arur	cattle lifting	West of Puramalainādu was ruled by Amaradakkiyar. When Kamayanar of Vellanādu initiated a cattle raid. While stopping his attempt, servant of Amaradakkiyar, Varumasattanar was killed.	<i>ānirai</i>	Hero with sword and a bow. A arrow runs through the hero's stomach	P.228
48	Pallava period	Salem, Pallathandanur	Skirmishes	Echchuvar Parumar, Ganga Parumariyar	<i>parumar, parumariyar</i>		
49	Pallava	Uttankarai	cattle lifting	Masinarukkanar was killed while recovering stolen cattle from Mupprakayaththan.	-	Hero with sword and arrow	P.231
50	7thAD	Salem, Omalur	cattle raid		-	Hero with a bow and arrow	P.436
51	7-8th AD	Salem Attur	battle	Neelagangai Araisar perumakkal, Maruthan was killed	<i>araisar, perumakkal</i>		p.485
52	7-8th AD	Salem Attur	skirmishes	stone set by villagers	-		p.486
53	8th AD	Salem Attur	skirmishes	Gangathi Araisar	<i>kovacchai</i>	Soldier with short sword and armor	p.486
54	Nolamba, 9 th AD	Arur, Kotrampatti	battle	Mankalakavithikal, son of Kakavalaian, was killed in a battle		Hero with a short sword and a bow. Three arrows are coming towards the hero	p.243
55	Nolambas 9th AD	Uttankarai	cattle lifting	Mukaiyan, son of Nunkilan Thondaiyan of Uthappiur was killed at the cattle raid at Tallapadi	<i>kali, kottupusal</i>	Hero with a bow and arrow. The Hero is seen wounded	p.234
56	Veera Nolamban, 10th AD	Arur, Muthanur	cattle lifting	Vallavariyar Nattar made a cattle raid. While recovering these cattle, Kamundarmaniyar Maniyamanar was killed		Hero with a short sword and a bow. Two cows are seen behind the hero	p.233

No.	Period	Place	Subject	Message	Key words	Portrayal	References
57	Nolambas, 10th AD	Arur, Sellamppatti	battle	Pritipati II, son of Sivamaraiyan kankanuman, son of Ayyappadevan waged a war. Thakadur Mavalinvanrayar's servant Koodal Manikkan was killed	-	-	p.234
58	Nolamba Iyeppeadeva	Arur, Periyapannimaduvu	cattle recovering	Poomayan, son of Pakayavar, was killed while recovering the cattle	-	Hero with knife and arrow. A cow stands beside the hero	p.235
59	Nolamba Iyeppeadeva	Uttankarai, Rettiur	fight with a pig	Rasapayanur Arayan Ayankutti was killed while fighting with a pig	pig hunting	Hero with a sword, dead pig is seen in front of him. Two pigs seers towards him	p.235
60	Veera Nolamban, 10th AD	Uttankarai	cattle recovering	Sekaththurudia Manikadiyan was killed while recovering the cattle	-	Hero, wounded by arrows. Two cows and a dog are seen besides the hero	p.236
61	Veera Nolamban, 10th AD	Uttankarai, Periyampompatti	cattle recovering	when Mamandaiyappan ruler of Sevattur raided the cattle, two heroes were killed while attempting to recover the cattle	-	Hero with a sword and an armor, two human heads on the floor, two cows beside.	p.236
62	Nolamba Iyeppeadeva	Palnjirahalli	cattle raid	Nakan, son of Salaiyan was killed in fighting	-	An arrow in right hand, and a cow beside the hero	p.236
63	10 th AD	Salem	<i>navakanda</i>	-	-	Navakanda sculpture	p.504
64	10th AD	Salem	<i>navakanda</i>	-	-	Navakanda sculpture	p..504
65	10th AD	Salem	<i>navakanda</i>	-	-	Navakanda sculpture	p..504
66	10th AD	Dindigal	cattle raid	-	-	Soldier with sword	p..505
67	10th AD	Salem K.N.Puttur	cattle raid	-	-	Soldier with a Sword and a bow. A buffalo is seen.	p.209

No.	Period	Place	Subject	Message	Key words	Portrayal	References
68	-	Erode, Tharapuram	cattle raid	-	<i>ānirai</i>	Soldier with long arrow and bow, knotted hair, short sword at wrist	p.429
69	10th AD	Namakkal, Koolipatti	cattle raid	Aarayan Ayiravan, Sadaiamaraiyan	<i>araiyan</i>	-	Avanam no.7
70	10th AD	Namakkal, Koolipatti	battle	Aarayan Ayiravan Ilangingamutirayan	<i>mutirayan, arayan</i>	-	Avanam no.7

ⁱ These hero stones have been listed by S.Krishnamurthy in his *nādukarkal* (herostones), Meyyappan Pathippakam, Chennai, 2004. The reference gives the page number from the book.

Chapter-V

State Society and Political Unification (11th to 13th CE)

One significant aspect of the societies discussed in the previous chapters is their semi-tribal nature characterized by clan and kin relationship. Here, the specialization in various services in an institutionalised hereditary form can be recognized, but it was not restricted to particular social groups. Depending more upon family labour, both the production and the consumption were organized communally. In spite of the unequal distribution of the surplus, there existed a kind of 'contract' among various occupational groups, keeping the reciprocal benefit and societal security in view. The function of leadership was not just to protect the kinsmen from external threat, but also to effectively involve the people and conduct the subsistence activities. There existed a possibility for demanding a lion's share in the surplus for performing relatively risky job, but the leader was yet to be fully relieved, at least in theory, from the production activities and was still accountable to the kinsmen for all his successes and failures. The notion of exploitation by means of hereditary power was not yet institutionalized. The broader divisions, such as the ruler-ruled, producer-non-producer etc. had already emerged, but it could not assume a clear shape since it was constrained by the existing 'social relations' dominated by agro-pastoral subsistence economy. We also find weak productive forces, not preciously enough to develop social relations compatible to the agricultural production.

In the previous chapters, the social groups discussed were nomadic tribes who spent much of their life on move. How these early tribes such as *kurumbar*, *eyiner*, *vedar*, *ayar*, *kuravar*, etc., began to settle gradually in the hilly regions of Kongu and then how it in turn led to the emergence of political society, discussed in this chapter, has brought out a clear picture about the social formation of the period. Another set of societies, analysed in the fourth chapter, had reached much closer to a form of 'state'. Nevertheless, they were still predominantly dominated by blood and kin bonds and not yet completely transformed from the previous social set-up. With an unstable surplus in production, the political circumstance was also much fluctuating and highly unpredictable. Despite the fact that there was an element of social cleavage, which is often attributed to a particular character of the 'state society', i.e., the division of society into 'ruler' and 'ruled', the societal circumstance was yet to produce a full-fledged state organization. It is precisely because of the aforesaid instability in production and a clan-based local segmented politics. In such situation there was hardly any need for the role

of any managerial institution like 'state'. It becomes clear once we recall our discussion about various definitions of the 'state society' in the first chapter.

1. Origin of Village Communities: The Primary Producers and their Relations

A detailed analysis of village communities is not within the scope of the present chapter. However, it will provide a better starting point since the state is developed upon the basis laid out by the village communities. The temple-oriented inscriptions are indeed, insufficient to study the village communities. Therein, the social institutions, collective beliefs and shared norms and values of common people are relatively invisible. As a result, rather than really bringing the village communities to the centre of historical analysis, several inscriptions-based studies have looked at it from the 'above'.¹

Generally, the transition in lower and upper layers of a society is distinguishable and it cannot be studied as a simultaneous process. Later is highly advantaged group within the existing social set-up, based on whatever mode of subsistence.² Acting or postulating as representatives of lower stratum, the upper stratum was able to develop its political and cultural contacts with other society and always tends to adopt new technical skill in production and new way of cultural practices. Sometime, it even controlled the inflow of these newly acquired knowledge and other prestigious stuffs to the lower strata. Secondly, by maintaining the social distance and their high connections, the upper strata were able to legitimize their authority over the lower. This seems to be a phenomenon even in chiefdoms of agro-pastoral society. Now one can see that the transition in upper stratum is highly visible and speedy whereas in lower stratum it is slow and in most cases not visible. Existing studies on history of social formation is often restricted only to the upper part since its institutions occupied almost entire space in the contemporary historical records, say inscriptions, art, architecture, etc.

In this context, village communities can be studied more effectively by referring to their own traditions practised to preserve the historical memory of rural folk. Folk

¹ Since the inscriptional records remain primary sources to analyze any aspects of the medieval society, most of the studies on medieval south India concentrate upon certain *brahmadeya* villages, where the inscriptions are found numerous. Scholars like Noburu Karashima moved little further and undertook a detailed analysis about the emergence of private landholding and structure of peasant institutions in non-*brahmadeya* villages. But still, the internal structure and stratification within the peasantry have not adequately been looked into.

² For example, the tribal chiefs, rich cattle breeders, the heroes who exhibited bravery at different juncture, traders, big landholders, artisans, etc achieved higher position in society and enjoyed more power and privileges in different points of history.

songs or any sort of oral traditions, in this regard, will give more clues than the inscriptions or any other official documents. An attempt in this line is made in the next chapter, while the present discussion will be mainly based on inscriptions.

The period when the tradition of stone inscriptions had high influence (i.e., the 11th to 13th century) occurred in between the dominance of two other historical traditions, namely herostones (upto 10th CE) and the social documents (predominantly from the 14th CE onwards). The sense of 'local' in terms of both people and events is relatively high in these two traditions than in the inscriptions. Therefore, given the limited scope in using inscriptions, a comparative analysis by drawing references from the early herostones and the later social documents will provide a relatively clear picture of village communities during the period when the inscriptions were dominantly used.

A bulk of primary producers, who had modest representation in the inscriptions and usually referred to by the generic term *kudikal* could have been constituted by the early tribes. They initially confined their production activities to herding and hunting, now came to be identified into two broad agrarian communities, viz., the *vettuvas* and the *vellalas*. There were also other communities including brahmans, engaged in different occupations such as trade, craft production, temple-oriented duties, etc. Most of them were new immigrants and their population constituted less in proportion, but enjoyed the support of political authority such as state. Altogether, we come across references to *vettuva*, *puluva*, *vellala*, *chetty*, *vanikar*, *yadavar*, *kaikolar*, *kammalar*, *kollan*, *thachan*, *saliar*, *vetkovar*, *kudumiyar*, *paraiyar* and *brahmans* in inscriptions. There were certainly several other communities and occupational groups which did not figure in the inscriptions. An inscription informs that the king permitted ninety-six communities of right-hand division to take in charge of a temple (Chart-3, No. 12).

The development of the aforesaid two peasant communities can be further studied in light of contemporary inscriptions. It would be rather difficult to draw any conclusive idea about the origin of the *vellalas* and the *vettuvas*. At present, there is a tendency among the leaders of these two communities to claim their indigenous origin.³ The claim of *vettuva* is being widely supported since their presence in the historical records can be observed right from the beginning of the Christian era. From the

³ For example, see, V. Ramamurthi, *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal* (Koundars of Kongu Nadu), Lotus Publishing Company, Tiruchirappalli, 1977, p.205; M.Rajasekara Thankamani, 'Namakkal Mavattathil Vettuvār' (Vettuvār in Namakkal District), in Kavingar. Tamilnadan (ed.), *Salem Mavattam Sila Ayyukal* (Studies on Salem District), Kavya Publication, Bangalore, 1988, pp. 98-110.

classical Tamil literature, it can be inferred that a considerable number of population belonged to this tribe, which gradually established a sedentized settlement. And leaders of this tribe controlled various parts of the region upto the medieval period.⁴ On the contrary, the term *vellala* finds no reference either in the relevant early classical texts or in the herostones of the later period. The earliest epigraphic reference to the *vellala* of Kongu comes from an inscription belonging to the 10th century. In this context, it is generally perceived that the *vellalas* of Kongu were basically immigrants from plain regions.⁵

Nevertheless, the socio-cultural institutional practices of the *vellalas* in Kongu are different from the *vellalas* of the plain regions. Their cultural and institutional practices seem to have steeped into the local tribal traditions. They are particularly quite similar with those of the indigenous *vettuvās*. For example, the *kootam* (totem or clan) divisions and internal structure, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, are specific to the *vettuvās* and *vellalas* of the Kongu region. There are 190 such *kootams* that have been identified in *vettuva* community and not less than 150 *kootams* among the *vellalas*.⁶ This regional specificity in socio-cultural practices makes us to link the origin of *vellalas* in Kongu from the indigenous tribal groups. A smaller section of the early tribes must have switched to agrarian mode of subsistence activities and subsequently came to be known as *vellala*, occupational name for agriculturalists.⁷ In other words, those who tried to have a deviation from the traditional economic and social practices began to identify themselves with the name of *vellalas*, as a sign of development and civilization. On the other hand, the *vettuvās*, who stuck to the traditional way of subsistence, continued to engage in herding supported by dry land cultivation. After the 10th century CE, more intensively during the 13th century CE, they also began to be attached with agrarian activities. By the time, the term *vellala* had assumed a caste form rather than simply an occupational category. Caste as a 'cultural construct', had to adopt strict institutional regulations in order to preserve their distinct

⁴ V. Ramamurthi, *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal*, op.cit., p. 305. Rajasekara Thankamani, 'Namakkal Mavattathil Vettuvār', op.cit., pp. 98-110; P. Pathmavathi, 'Velalar Kudipeyarchi' (Migration of Velalar), in Pulavar Maniyan, *Varalaril Velan Kudikal* (Velan communities in History), Kathiravan Achakam, Chennai, 1991, pp.34.

⁵ Arokiaswamy, *The Kongu Country*, University of Madras, Madras, 1956, p.267; Nal. Natarajan, *Kongu Velalar Varalaru* (The History of Kongu Velalar), Pallavi Pathippakam, Erode, 2001, p. 45.

⁶ Nal. Natarajan, *Kongu Velalar Varalaru*, op.cit., pp.65-66; Rajasekara Thankamani, 'Namakkal Mavattathil Vettuvār', op.cit., p.98.

⁷ M. Rajasekara Thankamani, *Kongil Vettuvār* (Vettuvār in Kongu), *Avanam Karutharanku Malar* [Avanam Seminar Papers] Tamilnadu Archaeological Society, Tanjore, p. 138.

identity and to avoid emulation from the lower order. Therefore, the other section of *vettuva*, which hitherto had anchored in pastoral subsistence, began to take up agriculture, which was to be identified as caste category rather than in occupational terms identifying themselves with the *vellala*.⁸ As a result, these indigenous tribal groups, which acquired peasant status at a different point of time, came under two broader caste divisions. During the medieval period the title *koundar* was generally suffixed with both these communities and thus they came to be called themselves as *vettuva koundar* and the *vellala koundar*. The title *koundar*, denoting once administrative and military authority was initially given to the village head and was later accepted by the all members of the community.⁹ While people formed into these two communities constituting the bulk of producing class, a section of peasant elites, who were the core of the ruling class, acting differently as landlords, owner of temples, village administrators, who maintained the dealings with the political authority such as state gradually, emerged from both these communities.

The formation of agrarian order in Kongu was not only confined to these internal developments but the wide opened dry zones of Kongu and relatively less density in population also opened up the terrain for the settlement of various social groups from the plain regions having a denser population. As a result, there was a constant influx of several occupational communities particularly from the deltaic regions such as the Kaveri and the Vaigai basins.¹⁰ A major section of the new immigrants belonged to the peasant folks, who had, by this time achieved reasonably good technical skill in their field.¹¹ Thus the proportion of the *vellala* population, as a caste, gradually increased. The migrant *vellala* mixed with the indigenous peasants were able to emerge as a dominant caste group and consequently came to be known as *kongu vellala*. The peasant migration had been a continuous process that went on upto the early modern period. Several later immigrants who settled in different points of time distinguished their identity by name of the region from where they had migrated. For instance, the *soliya*

⁸ The tile vellalar become common name for those who were engaged in agriculture. For example, some section of vettuva tribe called themselves as *vettuva vellalar*.

⁹ V. Ramamurthi, *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal*, op.cit., p. 207.

¹⁰ Arokiaswamy, *The Kongu Country*, op.cit., p.267. Nal.Natarajan, *Kongu Velalar Varalaru*, op.cit.,p.45.

¹¹ Ibid.

vellalas and *pandiya vellalas*, found in the inscriptions respectively denote that they were *vellalas* from the Chola and the Pandya region.¹²

By the end of the 13th century CE, a major part of the region was converted to suit wetland cultivation with the spread of *vellala* settlements. Among the 545 inscriptions listed here, the term *vellala* occurs in 52 inscriptions attesting *vellala* settlements in the Kongu region during the 13th century. References to *vellalakudikal* (Chart-3, No.50), *vellala nattavar* (Chart-3, Nos. 135 and 55) and *vellala uravar* (Chart-3, No.240) conform such village settlements. Leaders of the *vellala* community bore titles such as *pallavaraiyan* (Chart-3, Nos. 135, 240, etc), *araiyan* (Chart-3, Nos. 296, 314, etc), *velan* (Chart-3, Nos. 325, 427, 430, etc.), *kamundan* (Chart-3, No.358) *chola kamindan* (Chart-3, No.460), *mudali* (Chart-3, Nos. 337, 338, etc), *kon* (Chart-3, No.446), *alvan* (Chart-3, No.27, 28, etc), etc. These titleholders developed into a ruling class and began to act as leaders of local communities, landlords and servants of the state. While analyzing the spatial distribution of the reference to *vellala* settlement, it seems the northern part of Kongu was thickly populated by *vellala*. With regard to clan divisions (*kootam*) within the *vellala* community, references are found to *utamar* (Chart-3, No.251), *paiyar* (Chart-3, Nos. 263, 257, etc), *karuchiyar* (Chart-3, No.296), *korranthai* (Chart-3, No.403), *karunthozhi* (Chart-3, No.393, 441, etc), *vappar* (Chart-3, No.478), *devanthikal* (Chart-3, Nos. 462, 460, etc), *sadaiyar* (Chart-3, No.456), *manjar* (Chart-3, No. 452) *pulli* (Chart-3, No. 406), *mayilar* (Chart-3, Nos. 413, 394, etc), etc. Different clan (*kootam*) of *vellala* community lived together in a same village.¹³ For example, *vellala* donors of a particular village are said to have belonged to different clans. Big landlords and titleholders among the *vellalas*, who occupied leadership places in *nadu* and *ur* assemblies, have donated *iraili* land (Chart-3, No.32), while others contributed money, grains, materials, etc. In one instance, a *vellala* woman, wife of *vellalan korranthaikalil annikalan*, donated some money to the temple (Chart-3, No. 403). Interestingly, the personal name of a *vellala* donor is mentioned in an inscription as *vellalar pullikalil paraiyan paraiyan nattuk kamundan* (Chart-3, No.358). Here, the *vellala* is a community name and *pullikalil* denotes the clan of the donor and *nattuk*

¹² Ibid.

¹³ For example, the terms like *mudhalam kaniyalar*, *irandam kaniyalar* and *munram kaniyalar* are respectively meant first, second and third rights in a particular village. A social document records a mutual agreement reached by concerned people with regard to rights over local temple. Of this, *muthalam kaniyalar* had more rights than the other. Each landholding clan has a tradition of folk songs called *kanipadalkal* (songs on land), which narrates the *kani* rights and settlement history of the particular clan. In a few cases, there were disputes and fight between two *kootams* in capturing land in a village.

kamundan is title or social position. *Paraiyan paraiyan* seems to be the proper name of the donor. Since the term *paraiyar* is a name of lower caste during modern period, analysis on such sorts of proper names will give more clues to understand the nature of caste formation and emulation in the medieval period.

The *vettuv*as who were basically cattle breeders and hunters, in course of time began to be engaged in various occupations including agriculture and mercantile activities, did not mingle much with the newcomers. However, in the new material context, they were not able to do well in agrarian economy that gradually facilitated social dominance of *vellala*. In medieval social hierarchy, *vettuva* seemed to have occupied little lower position than the *vellala*. However, their presence in the inscriptions attests their mobility from an age-longed herding and hunting-centered socio-economic set-up. Certainly, a considerable number of village communities and primary producers belonged to *vettuva kudikal* and *puluva kudikal* (*puluvar* were one section of *vettuvar*) (Chart-3, Nos. 255, 373, etc). If lands were given, special arrangements were made in order to facilitate the settlement of *puluva kudikal* (Chart-3, Nos. 378, 374, etc). Thus a section of *vettuvar* was initially tenant cultivators or agricultural labours. Like *vellala*, local leaderships from *vettuva* peasantry also emerged. They became village headmen, *nadu* level leaders and acted as middlemen between the state and local communities (Chart-3, Nos. 173, 405, 246, 146, etc). *Puluva nattar* could have been in charge of tax collection from *puluva kudikal*. In one instance, the *puluva nattar* have directed the taxes from *puluva kudikal* to the temple (Chart-3, No. 200) One *urali* (village administer) belonging to *puluva* community constructed a tank and named it as *akkasalai gangai* before donating it for public use (Chart-3, No. 173). A *vettuva* leader, *venkachi vettuvan kaduvetti thiruvallampillai* by name, is said to have owned land in seven different villages. The aforesaid inscription gives list of the seven villages (Chart-3, No.170) similarly, a *urali pandi vettuvar* had the name of a *vettuva* leader of classical period. i.e., Adiyaman (Chart-3, No.146). One *patha vettuvaril pillappa udaiyan* seems to have owned a lake (*yen yeri*). He donated land watered from this lake as *kudineenka thiruvudaiyattam*. Owing to their tribal nature, strong physique and bravery in warfare, as seen in the *vettuv*as of classical period, they were assigned military functions.¹⁴ Once king constructed a dam and appointed the *puluvar* as guards. As marker of status and power, they also have constructed brahminical temples (Chart-

¹⁴ M.Rajasekara Thankamani, 'Namakkal Mavattathil Vettuvar', op.cit., p.98.

3, No.173), arranged and ensured their periodic function and donated land and money to the brahmans (Chart-3, No.13). They bore the titles such as *nadalvan*, *udaiyan*, *devan*, *mumudi chola chakravarti*, and *araiyan*. It seems that during the early medieval period caste identity did not take its rigid form. Caste names were lucidly used to identify either occupation or tribes. The titles such as *velar* and *velan* are often identified with the *vellalar* and peasants.¹⁵ In the inscriptions, these titles had been used for different communities including *vellala* and *vettuva*. *Vankachi* (Chart-3, No. 170), *pullai* (Chart-3, No.41), *sundai* (Chart-3, Nos. 43, 44, 176, etc), *puluvar* (Chart-3, Nos. 1136, 173, etc), *pandi* (Chart-3, No.146), *patha* (Chart-3, No.163), etc. were clans of *vettuva* community. In the light of inscriptions, one can presume that these aforesaid two peasant communities lived side by side. Inscriptions inform us that *puluva nattar* and *vellala nattar* of Vadaparisa Nadu jointly decided to donate *iraili* land to the temple (Chart-3, No. 246). Similarly, *puluva uralikal* and *vellala uralikal* of Vadaparisa Nadu came together to make donation to temple (Chart-3, No. 255). At the same time, these epigraphic evidences also show their separate settlement rather than a mingled living. Within a village or *nadu* they had their own administrative institutions such as *ur* and *nadu*. (Chart-3, Nos. 255, 246, etc) The local institutions functioned separately and addressed the interest of these respective communities. There could have been a prolonged tension between these two agrarian communities in Kongu. Several existing oral traditions like the *annamar kathaikal*, depicts the struggle between them.¹⁶

The reasonable expansion and increase in the agrarian production, the coming of plain cultures particularly the spread of the Bhakti movement, the gradual transition of the society into a state organization, demolition of traditional economic institutions, the settlement of hitherto a sort of tribal society permanently in the regions and above all a relative increase in surplus production along with other natural wealth of the region such as hill and forest products, minerals, precious stones, textile products, etc., favoured the necessary role of various social groups belonging to traders and artisans in Kongu. Communities of traders and their institution are equally represented in the inscriptions as that of peasants. The trading group would have emerged from different communities including the *vettuvass* and the *vellalas*, while major section of them were migrants from

¹⁵ R.Nagasamy, 'Undi Koduthor Uir Koduthore', in P.Pathmavathi, 'Velalar Kudipeyarchi' in Pulavar Maniyan (ed), *Varalarril Velan Kudikal* (Velan communities in History), Kathiravan Achakam, Chennai, 1991.

¹⁶ See, *Elder Brothers' Story (on Oral Epic of Tamil)*, collected and Translated by Brenda E.F.Beck, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras, 1992.

different regions of south India. Initially, the titles such as *chetty*, *mudali*, etc. were adopted by traders and later these titles became caste names.¹⁷ The personal names of traders in the inscriptions give some clues to infer their community of origin. The titles *mudali* and *chetty* have been used by *vellalar*, *vetkover* (potter), *brahmans*, *kollar* and *karampar*. Several *mudali* and *chetty* were basically big landholders. We are told that one *vellalan vicharkalil patti kovan mandala mudali* donated irali land to temple (Chart-3, No.370). Similarly, *keeranur mudali veerarajendira anuthirapallavan* also had donated land (Chart-3, No. 338). The name *vallalan mularil avinasi mudali cholanarayana kamindan* (Chart-3, No.463) indicates the community name (*vellala*), clan name (*mular*), place name (*avinasi*) and two titles (*mudali* and *kamintan*) along with the personal name (*cholanarayanan*). *Chetti* and *mudali* titles can be respectively seen in 1) *Vellalan kallan paraiyannaveerachola cilai chetty* (Chart-3, No. 302) and 2) *Vellalan korranthaikalil mudali veeran* (Chart-3, No.403) - both these persons belonged to the *vellala* community. Likewise, the names 1) *manrattu velankalil ur brahmanar kavuciya kottirattu devan chetty rajaraja brahmarayan* (Chart-3, No. 373) and 2) *Kaniudaiya shivabrahman kasiva kottirattil periyar mudali narpathennayira pattan* (Chart-3, No. 269) indicate that these titles were also used by brahman. A person belonging to *vetkover* (potter) community had the title of *chetty* (*vetkovaril murkan kurudanana nadaikonda nattu chetty*, (Chart-3, No. 218). *Karamparkalil mudali* and *mudali kollar kannuvan* belonged respectively to *karampar* and *kollar* (goldsmith) communities (Chart-3, No.151).

Nagarattar (Chart-3, Nos. 20, 70, etc), *nattu chettikal* (Chart-3, No. 399), *akkasalayar* (Chart-3, No. 247), *vyaparikal* (Chart-3, Nos. 376, 468, 95, etc), *vanika madikayar* (Chart-3, No. 246), etc. are often mentioned to denote group of traders according to their specialization. The *mudali* and *chetty* could have been part of these groups. However, sometimes they have been distinctly identified particularly with *nagarattar* (members of the local merchant association, the *nagaram*). In one instance there was a dispute between *nagarattar* and *chettikal* in conducting temple festival. Another inscription informs that *urar* and *mudalies* donated *iraili* land (Chart-3, No. 267). Though the major activities of these traders were confined mainly to urban centres, they can be considered as part of village community since they owe their origin from there.

¹⁷ P.Pathmavathi, 'Velalar Kudipeyarchi,' op.cit.

Kammalas and *kaikolas* were two dominant artisan groups who have frequent references in inscriptions. They might have migrated from the plain regions and settled in Kongu during the 12th and 13th centuries. There are also possibilities that the local artisans who engaged in similar social and economic functions began to identify themselves with *kaikolar* and *kammalars*. They were quite popular in plains and had gained higher social status with the emergence of temple-oriented socio-economic set-up. The *kammalar* is a common name for five occupational groups, which include *thachar*, *kollar*, *sirpi*, *kannan* and *porkollar*. The economic role of *kammalars* apparently became more vital for the society during the 13th century in Kongu when large-scale temple construction were undertaken. Their attachment with mercantile activities further increased the demand for their engagement in society. The emergence of *kammalas*, like all other social groups, is also very late in Kongu. The first inscriptional reference to *kammalas* can be dated during the 13th century AD. *Kammalas* in the plain region had high attachment with temple construction and began to read Vedas and Sanskrit.¹⁸ In some part of the region, they began to call themselves as *vishvakarmas* connecting their genealogy with Sun god. It is said that they developed to the extent to claim higher status than the *brahmans*. Though they could not reach the brahmanical status, grants of various privileges similar to brahmans recognized their role in society. The inscriptions from Kadathur inform the kings' special order to *then-kongu kammalar* to allow them to enjoy certain social privileges. Thereby they were allowed to blow double conch in their rituals, to use *patha rakzhai* and to plaster/cement their houses (Chart-3, No. 485). Similarly, in another inscription the *kaniudiya thachar* (carpenter), *thattan* (metal worker) and *kollar* (smith), were allowed by the king to blow double conch on special occasion (Chart-3, No. 204). The donation of *annamalai thattan* belonged to *kammalar* community has been recorded in an inscription (Chart-3, No. 83).

The *kaikolar* were basically weaver by profession and highly attached with the mercenary traders. *Kaikolar* were one among a few communities who could live in *thirumadaivalakam* (temple street). Like *kammalar*, the *kaikolar* were also granted some special rights. According to one, the *kaikolar* and *devaradiyar* who lived in *thirumadivalakam* were given right to sell or mortgage their land that was granted to them (Chart-3, No. 35). They also worked as troops. The phrases such as *kaikolarpada*i and *amattam kandan therintha kaikolar* are frequently referred (Chart-3, Nos. 217, 224,

¹⁸ Arokiyaswamy, *The Kongu Country*, op.cit., p.277.

etc.). One *amattakamandam therintha kaikola senapathi danapalan* has donated money to temple. Here the *kaikolar* donor has the title *senapathi* (leader of the troops). *Amattamakantam* is probably a special skill owned by the *kaikola* troops. The names such as *athirajarajan thirumadai valakathil irukkum kaikolan* (Chart-3, No. 250) and *kaikolaril kasi avinasi yellamvalla chola gangan* (Chart-3, No. 250) show the grand titles adopted by the *kaikolar*. In one occasion, both *uravar* and *kaikolar* had jointly donated money to a local temple (Chart-3, No. 267).

There are a few other communities which have inscriptional references. We come across *vannar* (washerman), *vetkovar* (potter) and *yadavar* making donation to temple and brahmans. We come to know that *vannan pichan chokkan* who constructed *thumpu* (canal) from a lake in Pelur and *vannan neela sellan* constructed the gateway for the Jain temple at Althur. With reference to *vetkovar*, a *kaniudaiya vetkovar* had donated money to Maruthur temple (Chart-3, No. 443). Similar kind of donation had also been made to the same temple by a *vetkovaril jeyapalan vayiradevan vazhithunai perumal* (Chart-3, No. 461).

Finally, there were two sections of society, of these one is frequently referred to while the other finds no space in inscriptions, and therefore, needs to be discussed briefly. Since the inscriptional documents were related to the temples, the brahmans find high representation. On the other hand, the agricultural and other manual labour, on account of their deprived status in the social hierarchy, had nothing to do with the transactions or arrangements documented in the epigraphic records.

The brahman settlement is generally considered as instrumental for the agrarian expansion.¹⁹ But the development of peasantry and their relations in Kongu need to be treated very cautiously without getting confused with that of plain region. As mentioned, despite the sudden switchover to agrarian mode of production, both the agricultural production and the surplus from it were not stable. And secondly, the peasant folk of Kongu are highly embedded in their traditional tribal pattern and cultural institutions, therefore the nature and function of various local institutions is quite different from those of the plains.²⁰ The much-debated close linkage between peasant and brahman is less visible and references pertaining to brahminical institutions

¹⁹ Champakalakshmi, R., 'State and Economy: South India Circa A.D.400-1300' in Romila Thapar (ed), *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History*, Popular Prakasan, Bombay, 1995, p.272.

²⁰ The *kootam* stratification among the peasant communities in Kongu can be cited as best example in this regard.

are also relatively less and confined to a few fertile localities. Many reasons can be cited for this. First, the existence of brahmanical settlements was viable only in the fertile zones. Secondly, most of the brahminical settlements were always backed by state support. In a sense brahminical settlements provided the rulers with a kind of ideological legitimization. This process of ideological legitimization by initiating brahminical settlements, however, progressed very sluggishly in the frontier zones like Kongu. Similarly, the impact of Bhakti movement reached the Kongu region quite later, therefore there was not much space for the brahminical institutions in society. Finally, the independent nature of the Kongu rulers right from the beginning of the classical period was another decisive factor. None of the existing states was able to extend their territory over the region and to subjugate its rulers who at this point of time were highly embedded in their traditional values and practices.

With the growth of agrarian expansion the reference to brahminical settlement in Kongu also increases, but such brahminical establishments are still relatively lesser in number. Except a few localities, in all other places the brahman settlements and their institutions such as *sabha*, *saturvedimangalam*, *thaniur*, etc., were sparsely found. In most cases, we see that the brahmans had to live just like other migrant communities. Brahmans were appointed as temple functionaries, given land in lieu of their salary and granted special rights. Like peasants, traders, and artisans, they had their own assembly, undertook temple activities, adopted various titles and even donated land and money to the temple. We have already seen the adaptation of titles such as *chetty* and *mudali* by the brahmans. In addition to this, they also had titles signifying power and status. For example, personal names such as *shiva brahmana rajaraja pattan makan vikiramachola pattan* and *chola adisaiva chakravarti* show that ruler's personal name was used by the brahmans (Chart-3, No. 321). Basically, it reveals their political power as practiced by several local level chiefs. Several individual brahmans and brahmanical institutions have donated land and money to temple (Chart-3, No. 383). Interestingly, according to an inscription, the brahmans had to deposit some money in order to get special rights from the king. On this, they were entitled to have several rights including the right to use of China umbrella. *Kani* rights of some brahmans were transferred to others since they were not able to pay back the borrowed money. Several times the donated lands were taken back on account of negligence of their temple-oriented duty (Chart-3, No.48). In very few cases, the brahmans developed into big landlords, but in most cases they were

under the control of the state machinery. It has been argued that 'the identity of the brahman rested on the construction as the central sacred figure in society'.²¹ For example, on special occasions such as birthday, etc., individual donors used to make donation to feed brahmans. *Korranthai pothuvan mari* (Chart-3, No.397), *murikamakkanar* (Chart-3, No.117) and *iranamuka narayanan* are said to have donated *kazhanju pon* to feed brahmans at their birthday (Chart-3, No.72). There are several similar examples where brahmans were treated as sacred.

2. Production and the Surplus: The Regional Variation

The substantial changes in the methods of production, which began during the early centuries and got intensified during the 12th and 13th century, brought about favourable conditions for the development of exploitative institution of the ruling class, i.e., the state. The contemporary sources clearly indicate the operation of agriculture-based social production and the emergence of composite ruling class. Looking at the region from the physiological point of view, it was not much favourable for cultivation without substantial amount of human interventions. Towards the 10th century, the passion over pastoralism was diluted with the spread of large-scale agrarian activities. While the settlement of people from well-developed agrarian regions accelerated the process, the internal process had also adequately developed to enter into a new phase in the subsistence production. As a result, major sections of early tribes began to deviate from the traditional method of production and began to look for alternate options to till the land.

In fact, cultivation was not entirely new to the society, however till the time it was not ripe enough to carry out intensive production activities. The technological advancement, particularly in irrigation, brought larger tracts of dry lands into cultivation. The sudden intensification of agrarian activities served favourably to suit the interests of the ruling class at least in two aspects. Facilitating the agricultural arrangements became an advantageous and easiest method for projecting the benevolent nature of the ruler. Thus it helped the ruler to legitimize and establish voluntary acceptance of his power. Secondly, the increase in the productivity enabled the rulers to extract the surplus legitimately and to further enhance their wealth and accordingly the

²¹ Kumkum Roy, 'Some Problems in Constructing *Varna* Identities in Early North India', in Dev Nathan, *Tribe to Caste*, Indian institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, 1997, p.176.

power. In the following pages, the inscriptional references are being taken for empirical analysis so as to examine the linkage between the mode of production and emergence of the state apparatus.

Among 545 inscriptions, more than 154 inscriptions refer to land and cultivation. The references with regard to land gradually increase from the 10th century to the 13th century CE. 143 inscriptions of the total inscriptions provide references to metal and money, out of which 127 epigraphic references belong to the 13th century.

Table 1: Chronological order of donations

Nature of Donation	11th CE	12th CE	13th CE	Total
Land	-	21	133	154
Money	8	8	127	143
Grains	2	6	20	28
Building Materials	2	12	91	105
Others	7	10	96	113

Based on the quality of land and the accessibility to the water reservoirs, the land was divided into two broader sections, *nansey* and *punsey*. The system was quite prevalent across the peninsular India to categorize the land on the basis of accessibility to irrigation. The lands, which had access to the water reservoirs, came under the *nansey* category. They were capable of higher productivity and can be cultivated throughout the year. *Punsey* meant the dry lands suitable for cultivation only in the rainy seasons. It is quite clear that the proportion of *punsey* lands outnumbered the *nansey*. When the lands were donated to the temple, they generally consisted of both *nansey* and *punsey* lands. As there were clear-cut distinction between the two tracts of these lands, generally the well-irrigated lands had high value and owned by rich land lords. An inscription from Arakazhur gives clues to get the value of *nansey* and *punsey* lands. The donor in this inscription bought 3170 $\frac{3}{4}$ *kuzhi nansey* lands and 7115 *kuzhi punsey* lands at the rate of 6 *kacu* and 2 *kacu* per *kuzhi* respectively. Therefore, the difference in the value of these two categories of the land was 3:1. Within the *punsey* tracts, there were several internal categories viz., *karapunsey* (Chart-3, No. 14) and *potta punsey* (Chart-3, No. 99). *Yenthal parru* (Chart-3, No. 5) and *natham* (Chart-3, No. 139) were other categories of land which are often referred with *nansey* and *punsey* categories. The specific meaning of *yenthal parru* is not known, while *natham* meant habitation sites. If *punsey* land were donated with tax exemption it was known as *iraili punsey* (Chart-3, No. 99). The irrigated cultivable land might have been further divided into *orupu nilam* (one crop) and *irupu nilam* (two crops). Since *irupu nilam* has

mentioned only once as a special category, major plots of irrigated land could have been *orupu nilam*. There would have been a continuous process of clearing the forest and bringing them into cultivation. The term *kaduvetti thiruthia nilam* could have been used to mean such lands. The meaning of *varapparru nilam* is not clear, though probably meant the land given for tenant cultivation. These *varapparrunilam* also form major portion of the land donated to temple. Though *nilam* was a general term for land, land has been differently referred using terms such as *kani*, *kazhani*, *kadu*, *thottam*, *kollai*, *thoppu*, etc, based on the nature of cultivation.

However, still considerable portion of the region did not come under cultivation. The areas which were closer to the natural reservoirs and channels had remained as epicenter of all socio-economic and political activities. In this regard, regional variation within the Kongu region is clearly evident. Method of production and nature of landholding, land assessment and revenue collection vary considerably from place to place within the region. Variation can also be seen in the use of production related terms, techniques, irrigation methods, brahmans settlements, etc. Table 2 gives details about nature of donations in 10 Blocks of present Kongu region.²² It enables us to study the extent and intensity of agrarian activities and production during the period of study.

Table 2: Nature of donations and their spatial distribution

Place	Land (%)	Money (%)	Grains (%)	Materials (%)	Others (%)	Total
Salem	7 (21.87) (5.11)	7 (21.87) (4.96)	2	15 (46.87) (16.85)	1	32
Tiruchenkodu	8 (23.52) (6.29)	15 (44.11) (10.63)	1	10 (29.41) (11.23)	0	34
Atthur	29 (76.31) (22.83)	2 (5.28) (1.41)	2	1 (2.63) (1.12)	4	38
Oamalur	8 (100) (6.29)	0 (0) (0)	0	0 (0) (0)	0	8
Rasipuram	7 (43.75) (5.41)	2 (12.5) (1.41)	1	2 (12.5) (2.24)	4	16
Namakkal	5 (25) (11.81)	6 (30) (4.25)	1	5 (25) (5.61)	3	20
Avinasi	15 (16.85) (11.81)	41 (46.06) (29.07)	6	10 (11.23) (11.23)	17	89
Coimbatore	15 (24.19) (11.81)	23 (37.09) (16.31)	1	7 (11.29) (7.86)	16	62
Udumalaipettai	20 (25.51) (15.74)	15 (18.98) (10.63)	7	33 (43.77) (37.07)	4	79
Total	127	141		89		

²² Inscriptions from Pollachi, Erode, Tiruppur, Mettupalayam, Bhavani, Palladam and Kangeyam blocks have been excluded from the analysis.

According to the data given in the table, the number of land donations in Atthur is high. Its proportion in total number of donations (76.31 per cent) within Atthur and total number of land donations (22.83 per cent) in the entire Kongu region is also high. Atthur could have played a vital role in agricultural production since we find inscriptions of almost all contemporary ruling dynasties of the 13th century south India. Obviously, rulers had tried to establish their sway over this region. We find inscriptions dated with the regnal years of different rulers belonged to different dynasties within a short span of time. Similarly, the direct involvement of the state in the local affairs of Atthur region is relatively frequent and most of the land donations have been made directly by the rulers. References with regard to irrigation, revenue terms, brahminical settlements, etc., are also frequent and they show the operation of a well-developed agrarian based socio-economic system. As the name (village of river) itself suggests, the fertility of the region, *kulasekara periya eri* (Chart-3, Nos. 14 and 17) and *veera chola nallur periya eri* (Chart-3, No.81) are mentioned along with *kulam* (tank), *aru* (river), *vaikal* (cannals), etc. Coimbatore, situated in northwestern part of Kongu, is another region where we find a good number of documents referring to agrarian centered activities. In Coimbatore, the number of land donations is less (24.19 per cent) and its percentage in total number of land-donations of all parts of Kongu (11.81) is less than Atthur. Though it shows the spread of agriculture in the northern and northwestern part of Kongu, the pattern of agrarian settlement in these regions seems to be scattered. With few exceptions, almost all of 62 inscriptions from Coimbatore have been dated with the regnal years of local independent rulers, i.e., the Kongu Cholas. In addition to scattered indications to brahminical institutions, both the nature of brahman and peasant settlements seem to be different from that of Atthur. Inscriptional messages are very short and they give fewer clues to revenue systems. Rather than agriculture, donations in the form of money (37.09 per cent) and building materials are frequent and local leaders and common people have often made them. The situation in Avinasi and Udumalaipettai is more or less same as in Coimbatore. Most of the inscriptions of these regions belonged to the rulers of independent ruling families such as Kongu Cholas and Kongu Pandyas, who had documented money (46.6% and 18.9 % respectively) and material (11.23 per cent and 43.77 per cent respectively) transaction. However, in the light of Avinasi inscription we glean a thickly populated peasant settlement and well-developed system to extract the surplus in production. In addition to irrigational arrangements, several inscriptions supply a good deal of information about various taxes. While Salem

has equal proportion of land (21.77 per cent) and money (21.77 per cent) donations, donation in the form of materials almost double their number (46.87 per cent). However, the references related to irrigation are striking. We come across names of certain lakes, such as *periya eri*, *maravan eri*, *pazhavan eri* and *panchanthanki eri*. From them we can presume a well-developed peasant settlement and reasonable advancement in water management. All the inscriptions collected from Omalur, so far, were records of land donation. Apart from providing details about the land donations, these inscriptions yield valuable information about contemporary irrigational arrangements in lower part of the Kongu region. However, their number is less and we do not have any record dealing with money and material transactions. Finally, in Thiruchenkodu, Rasipuram and Namakkal regions, the traces of land donation have modest representation (6.29 per cent, 5.41 per cent and 11.81 per cent respectively). Among these three regions, in Thiruchenkodu the percentage of money and material transactions (10.63 per cent and 11.23 per cent respectively) is high. Except Atthur, the involvement of individuals such as local chiefs, landholder, members of assemblies, traders, craftsmen, etc., as donors, executors or simply signatories of the documents is more. Similarly in Atthur, the influence of external rulers is relatively high probably due to the reason of its location in the border region of Kongu.

The preceding discussion enables us to have broader view on agrarian expansion during the early medieval Kongu and its local variation. The variation in the nature of donation can be taken as indicative of the variation in the intensity of agrarian production. If variation in production is understood, one can easily presume that the nature of village settlements may also vary accordingly. At this level, we can pursue the discussion with the emerging conclusion that there had been substantial spatial spread of peasant community and there existed reasonably a mature system to extract the surplus from the peasants.

2.1. Irrigation

While discussing about the settlement of peasant communities, the *vellalas* and the *vettuvās*, we have examined the possible trajectories in which the early agro-pastoral society gradually stepped into agrarian production. As stated before, ecological condition of the region was not much favourable to large-scale cultivation. This is not only because of rocky land, but also due to dry and forested zones, which spread over major portion. Therefore at an initial stage, facilitating irrigational arrangements and

bringing the social groups into the process of cultivation were given primary importance by rulers. To some extent, it was done for the purpose of legitimizing their power over social groups. Though inscriptional records referring to state-sponsored irrigation projects are scarce, a good number of inscriptions do talk about the irrigational arrangements facilitated by the local chiefs, assemblies and private individuals including traders. Construction of lakes (*eri*) seems to be a major irrigational activity undertaken by rulers. We have already referred names of a few *eri* in Salem viz., *periya eri* (Chart-3, No. 99), *maravan eri* (Chart-3, No.90), *pazhavan eri* (Chart-3, No.81) and *panchanthanki eri* (Chart-3, No.81). Here, an inscription also informs us that *selanattu manikkan* constructed *eri* and donated land watered from the *eri* to the temple *devadan iraili* (Chart-3, No.73). The reference to construction of a tank, *akkasalai gangai*, by *urali sundai vettuvan* was already mentioned (Chart-3, No.173). An assembly of *munrukarai nattar* had taken initiative to repair the *eri* of *saturvedimangalm*. Some beneficiaries in Salem have received land watered by *moorkilpalla eri* (Chart-3, No.95) and *ahambadiyar eri* (Chart-3, No.179), while some were allowed to use water from a damaged *eri* (*odaieri*) with a condition to repair the lake. Several *eri* names are also found in other regions as well. *Cirrerri* and *periyeri* (Chart-3, No.99) are mentioned in several inscriptions collected from Atthur. The boundaries of one *varaparru nansey nilam* donated by Vanakovariyan in Atthur are given as follows: the eastern limit is *kanni vaikal* (a canal), south - *kinaru* (a well), west- *periya madhaku vaikal* (a canal), and the northern limit is *devadana vaikal* (a canal) (Chart-3, No.103). The inscription is a classical evidence for a developed canal irrigation system. From same region, an inscription records that *devadana iraili nilam* was donated to temple functionaries, in which the grantees were allowed to get water from *kal thampu madai*. *Tharamanaglathu mudalikal*, the local chiefs from Omalur regions, were said to have donated a tank (*kulam*), named as *perumal eri*, to *pattars* (brahman temple priests) of *saturvedimangalam* (Chart-3, No.9). The same chiefs, according to another inscription, donated land to *pattars* in five different places. They were: 1) Lands watered by *karaikulam*, 2) Lands watered by *perumal eri* and *jeyaperumal eri*, 3) Lands located in northern side of *thannanayakkan eri* and watered by *kannathai eri*, 4) Lands watered by *kezhapoikarai*, 5) *Nansey*, *punsey*, *natham* and *uruni* lands located within the four boundaries of *nattukulam*, and 6) Lands watered by tanks including *somapallayeri* (Chart-3, No. 111). In Thiruchenkodu, a decision has been reached to spend the incomes (*pasi pattam*) from *cirrerri* and *periyeri* and incomes from *kalanai*, *kalyanam*

and *tharagu* for *al* (labour), *thevanam* (fodder) and *vandi* (bullock cart) to raise the height of bank of these two *eri*. A 10th century inscription from Namakkal informs the donation *kulam* (tank) by Prathikandaitharach Cholan, probably a local chief.

From the northern part of the Kongu region, the Avinasi inscriptions refer to some special terms such as *urciru kavaru sevvai*, *kani kavaru sevvai* and *vach sevvai* which denote irrigation arrangements (Chart-3, No. 199). Though the specific meaning of these terms is not clear, they might have been used to mark canals from rivers. We also come across terms like *kulam*, *kinaru*, *madai*, *sunai*, etc. from Coimbatore inscriptions. Lands with *ureri* have been donated in Perur of Coimbatore Taluk. On the request of Perur's *sabhayar* and *urar*, a Kongu Chola allowed them to draw water from *devi cirai anai* (a dam) by constructing a new canal. While doing so, they were directed not to damage the other dam called *kolur anai* (Chart-3, No.378), *athirajaraja vaikal* (Chart-3, No. 380) and *thiruvannpatti vaikal* (Chart-3, No. 381). Permission was given to nine brahmans and one merchant to renovate a damaged tank (*udai kulam*) by the *urar* and *uralikal* of the village. For this work, they were allowed to cultivate the lands irrigated by the tank. Tax exemption was also given for certain number of years (Chart-3, No.473).

The question of ownership over water reservoirs is a significant aspect in Indian historical writings since the basic subsistence activity depends upon the accessibility to the water reservoirs. Thus by controlling access to water, one can exercise one's power or authority over the producers. The aforesaid inscriptional evidences give considerable space to examine the nature of ownership. Though any kind of generalization will not bring out the real picture in this regard, yet one can assume the hold of local leaders and assemblies over water bodies. In many cases, the individuals and locally influential persons have constructed such reservoirs. The phrases such as *yen eri* (my lake) and *yen kulam* have frequently been used and it confirms the individual ownership over water (Chart-3, No. 4). The land having accessibility to water reservoirs had high value. Most of the lands, which were donated, to the temple and the brahmans fall in this category. The water reservoirs constructed by the individuals or rulers were named after by them. In some cases, a special permission was necessary to get the land connected with the irrigational arrangements of nearby tank or lake. Examples can be cited from a few inscriptions in which the land was donated by a person while the right to use water from tank for the land had been confirmed by another donor. Similarly, there is another

category of records where the land and the taxes over that particular land have been granted by two different donors (Chart-3, No. 5,6). In cases where both land and taxes were donated together, the donor was presumably a powerful person. The land of high value was generally owned by the dominant peasant communities and brahmans. There was understandably a tendency to donate the land that was located just behind the lake or tank and in a sense it reflects the social status of the donor.

2.2 Landholding

Table 3: Land Transaction and Ownership of Land

No	Nature of land transaction	Ownership of Land		Place	Reference
		I	II		
1	Thalaiyan Cholanka Devar donated land	Chief	Temple	Rasipuram	1
2	200 Kuzhi land was donated as <i>thiruvilakkupuram</i>	Officer/king	Temple	Atthur	2
3	Cholakkon donated land	Chief	Temple	Atthur	4
4	Malaiman Sempaialavan sold his land to temple	Chief	Temple	Rasipuram	5
5	Donation of <i>iraili</i> land	Officer/king	Temple	Arakazhur	9
6	Donation of <i>iraili</i> land	Officer/king	Temple	Atthur	12
7	Ragtharaiyan donated land	Chief	Temple	Atthur	15
8	King donated land	King	Temple	Atthur	16
9	King donated land	King	Temple	Atthur	17
10	<i>Kudineenka devadanam</i> was established by <i>nattar</i>	<i>Nattar</i>	Temple	Atthur	20
11	Land donation	Officer/king	Temple	Atthur	21
12	Land donation	King	Temple	Atthur	24
13	Land was purchased from eight persons donated to temple	-	-	Atthur	24
14	Perumal Parru <i>nansey</i>	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
15	Thillai Nayaka Nampi Parru <i>nansey</i>	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
16	Periyanampiparru	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
17	Devapperumalparru <i>nansey</i>	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
18	Thirukamanparru <i>nansey</i>	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
19	Thillainayaka Nampi parru	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
20	Vanduvarayathi Nampiparru <i>nansey</i>	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
21	Ponnampalanampi <i>nansey</i>	Brahman	Temple	Atthur	24
22	Donation of <i>iraili</i> land	Officer/king	Temple	Atthur	
23	Kumaran Thakkaiur Devan donated land	Chief	Temple	Atthur	26
24	3000 <i>kuzhi</i> land was donated	Officer/king	Temple	Atthur	27
25	Land donation	Officer/king	Temple	Atthur	28
26	Land donation	Officer/king	Temple	Atthur	30
27	Raman Chakaravarti sold his land to brahman	Chief	Brahman	Thiruchenkodu	47

28	Pirathikandan's donation	Chief	Temple		
29	Ponnerivarmar's donation	Chief	Temple	Namakkal	68
30	Manikkan burchased land from Cholanka Devan	Chief	Chief	Salem	73
31	Selaman burchased land from <i>sabha</i>	Chief	<i>Sabha</i>	Salem	81
32	Kulotunkachola Vanakovaraiyar's donation	Chief	Land	Atthur	99
33	Donation of devadana <i>iraili</i> land	King	Temple	Atthur	101
34	Donation of devadana <i>iraili</i> land	King	Temple	Atthur	102
35	Donation of land	King	Two individuals		104
36	<i>Nattar</i> and Kandiyadevar donated land	<i>Nattar</i> /chief	Temple	Omalur	106
37	<i>Nattars</i> sold their land to Pattar	<i>Nattar</i>	Brahman	Omalur	107
38	Seven Mudalikal donated land to Pattar			Omalur	108
39	Kaduntharka Mudali	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
40	Sathar Mudali Udaiyappan	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
41	Kariya Devar Mudali	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
42	Anaikutti Mudali	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
43	Cilampandai	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
44	Udaiyappan Anaiyar	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
45	Pillai Mudali	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
46	Ciru Udaiyar Mudali	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
47	Ramandai	Land lord	Brahman	Omalur	108
48	Land donation to Brahman	Officer/king	Brahman	Omalur	109
49	Thannakkar's <i>iraili</i> land donation			Omalur	111
50	Raghnatharayan Arulalath Thannakkar	Land lord	Temple	Omalur	111
51	Peykadi Thannakkar	Land lord	Temple	Omalur	111
52	Tehthayar Thannakkar	Land lord	Temple	Omalur	111
53	<i>Uravar</i> and <i>Mudali</i> donated land	<i>Uravar</i> /land lord	Temple	Omalur	112
54	Pullai <i>vettuvan</i> Arankarayan	Land lord	Temple	Namakkal	137
55	<i>Nattar</i> , <i>Nagarattar</i> and <i>Sabhayar</i>	Local assemblies	Temple	Namakkal	138
56	<i>Nattar</i> , <i>Nagarattar</i> donated land to a medical healer	Local assemblies	Individual	Namakkal	139
57	Donation of devadana village	<i>Nattar</i>	Temple	Thiruchenkodu	153
58	Cholankadevar donated land	Chief	Temple	Thiruchenkodu	154
60	Urali Kannadevan's son Gangakondan	Chief	Temple	Thiruchenkodu	157
61	<i>Nattar</i> donated land	<i>Nattar</i>	Temple	Thiruchenkodu	160
69	Yezhumpothazhikiyan received land		Individual	Avinasi	205
70	Donation of <i>devadana</i> land	King	Temple	Avinais	208
71	Donation of land to temple functionaries	<i>Nattar</i>	Individuals		

72	Donation of <i>devadana</i> village	King	Temple	Avinasi	274
73	Donation of village	King	Temple	Avinasi	264
74	Donation of village	King	Temple	Avinasi	265
75	King donated land	King	Temple	Udumalaipettai	276
76	Pallavarayan Kani	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	276
77	Samanthar Kani	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	276
78	On the deposit of money king donated land	King	Temple	Udumalaipettai	277
79	Pallavarayan sold his land to temple	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	278
80	Araisukkatti donated land	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	284
81	Donation of <i>iraili</i> land	King	Temple	Udumalaipettai	291
82	King donated land	King	Temple		
83	<i>Sabhayar</i> donated land	Sabha	Temple	Udumalaipettai	332
84	Cholan Adi Saiva Chakaravarti's donation	Brahman	Temple	Udumalaipettai	336
85	Veerachola Irunkolan donated land	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	337
86	Pallavarayan Nilam	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	337
87	Chulamani Nilam	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	337
88	Kanrandan Manrattu Kani	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	337
89	Thakarayan Nilam	Chief	Temple	Udumalaipettai	337
90	Land was burchased from a <i>vellalan</i>	Land lord	Temple	Udumalaipettai	340
91	Anuthirappallavarayan's donation	Land lord	Temple	Udumalaipettai	341
92	Kallai Kariyan Nilam	Land lord	Temple	Udumalaipattai	341
93	Athivariyan sey	Land lord	Temple	Udumalaipattai	341
94	Abimana Chola Pallavaraiyan	Land lord	Temple	Udumalaipettai	341
95	Azhakiya Chola Pallavaraiyan Nilam	Land lord	Temple	Udumalaipettai	341
97	Donation of <i>devadana</i> village	King	Temple	Coimbatore	368
98	<i>Urar</i> , <i>Nagarattar</i> donated <i>iraili</i> land	Assemblies	Temple	Coimbatore	372
99	Athisaya Chola Mannarai	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	372
100	Uyyankonda Chola Mannarai	Officer	Temple	Coimbatore	372
101	Thondaiman Nilam	Officer	Temple	Coimbatore	372
102	<i>Urar</i> , <i>uralikal</i> donated <i>devadana</i> land	<i>Urar</i>	Temple	Coimbatore	373
103	Rajaraja Brahmarayan Manrattu	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
104	Devan Vithi Manrattu	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
105	Ciruvathi Manrattu	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
106	Padi Manrattu	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
107	Araiyan Manrattu	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
108	Devan Manrattu	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
109	Perumal Devan Manrattu	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
110	Manradi donated land	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	373
111	Sabhayar donated land	Sabha	Temple	Coimbatore	380

112	King donated land	King	Temple	Coimbatore	410
113	King donated land	King	Temple	Coimbatore	422
114	Pallavaraiyan donated land	Chief	Temple	Coimbatore	481
115	Merchant Ciriyanpillai donated land	Merchant	Temple	Coimbatore	464

The inscriptions listed above are useful to develop a broad understanding about the land holding pattern. It is quite clear that the personal right over agricultural tracts was gradually expanding. Individuals had right to sell, donate or give their land for tenant cultivation. With few exceptions, the land transactions were generally confined to the upper strata of the society. The land was circulated among the landlords, chiefs, temples and the state functionaries. Very rarely, it reached the hands of individual holders like *kaikolar*, *devaradiyars*, healers, temple gardeners, etc. But such land donations, either in the form of entire village or a piece of cultivable plot, had helped immensely the consolidation of private ownership. Yet another aspect that may have caused the multiplication of private ownership on land but may not be proved empirically is social stratification and property relation in non-brahman villages.

The larger tracts of unused lands, especially the forest and dry lands were gradually occupied by other sections of the society, and it often led to the development of private property in landholding. On the other hand, these unused lands were given to the landless cultivators so as to make the land suitable for cultivation, and thus certain section of the peasant community might have become tenant cultivations. The term *varapparru* land can be taken as an indicator of this phenomenon. Since the land became the focal point of all kinds of socio-economic activities, an attempt to acquire land was closely associated with accumulation of wealth. Presumably, the social groups always tried to bring new lands under cultivation. The forestlands, in particular, were targeted and there could have been continuous attempts in extending the agricultural zones over the forest region through the process of deforestation. As stated, a considerable portion of tracts donated to the temple fall into the category of *kaduvetti thiruthiyanilam* (land after clearing the forest). In several cases, the grantees were asked to clear the forest in the donated land and thus make it ready for cultivation. As new tracts were brought into cultivation, the possibility for the emergence of new individual ownership on land was also high. The private ownership over land further developed when lands were donated to the brahmins, temple functionaries and others. Even the lands, which were donated to

the temples, were in turn redistributed to the local people for cultivation. These tenant cultivators formed another category of landholding community. Since the land donated to the temple and brahmins were of high quality, the recipients of the lands, in course of time, could be able to dominate in the production activity owing to reasonable higher productivity of their land. The brahmins were one such group that became a rich landholding section, though they had not personally involved in cultivation. Nevertheless, the landholding community as a whole constituted a minority among various social groups. Yet, there were larger section of people who remained landless such as agricultural labourers, artisans and manual workers.

Karashima's micro-level analysis has shown that the private land holding was high in brahmin villages while it was far less in non-brahmin villages.²³ But the problem that needs to be highlighted is that the epigraphic evidence for the study of the structure of non-brahmin villages may not be adequate. As a result, various aspects of non-brahmin villages have not yet been effectively studied. Ownership over several villages by a landlord would mean his right to collect a share of production from the cultivators. Viewed from the perspective of the cultivators, they might appear as the owners of the land in which they were engaged in tilling. They could increase landed property by clearing forest and bringing virgin land under cultivation, but for this they had to pay the due share to the landlords or landholders. In many instances, the grantees have been asked to clear the forest in the donated lands. Therefore even in the non-brahmin villages, every family or extended family could be considered as a production unit, which exercised authority to cultivate a particular tract of land. To most of these local producers, their immediate authorities, i.e., the assemblies or chiefs appeared like a state. As long as they were able to pay the revenue, they could retain their right to cultivation. Within the primary producers there would have been transfer and exchange of land rights, with or without the knowledge of the landlord or any other superior authority. One cannot expect its appearance in the inscriptions since their purpose was to serve something different. But their right over land was uncertain and anytime it could be taken from the cultivators. Even some brahmins who were conferred private rights over certain pieces of lands were threatened with the loss of their rights by the order of the state or local assemblies (Chart-3, No.48).

²³ Noboru Karashima, *History and Society in South India: The Cholas to Vijayanagar*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p.13.

There was another category of owners consisting of the members of the local assemblies such as *ur*, *nadu*, *nagaram*, *sabha*, individual landlords, chiefs, state representatives and brahman land owners who played a vital role throughout the medieval history. The instances of land transactions listed above shows that the land was generally transferred from the hold of these middle groups. The assemblies collectively or separately participated in land transactions. In the above list, we find thirteen cases where the local assemblies were involved in the land transactions. Of these, *nadu* was involved individually in five instances, each of the *ur* and *sabha* were involved once. *Nadu* and *nagaram* came together two times, while the collaboration of *nadu*, *sabha* and *nagaram* was seen in one case. Each of the *ur* and *nadu* were also found with an individual in one instance. In several instances, individuals (including chiefs, landlords, officers) have evidently donated, sold or purchased land. In Atthur, we come across several individual landlords (Chart-3, No. 26) and state representatives (Chart-3, No. 2) have donated iraili land to the temple in different occasions. The power and function of these different donors, however, are not clear. But they could have been big landlords associated with different institutions. While defining the boundaries of donated or sold lands, the names of thirty-four individual owners of adjoining land have also been mentioned. If the king is said to have donated *irali* land, state officers or local assemblies have executed it. Personal names, such as *vanakovarayan*, *vallavarayan*, *vilupatharayan*, *kalinkarayan*, etc., come under state officers category. In one interesting inscription, a mutual agreement was reached by four chiefs namely *azhakiya ethirili chola sampuvarayan*, *ponparapina vankovarayar*, *kulotunka chola vankovaryar* and *Kadavaryar*, whereby each agreed not to work against the other. The personal names of these chiefs are quite similar to the above said 'kings men'. It indicates that the chiefs have acted independently as well as the representatives of state. To a state, at this juncture, the territorial extension would simply mean just winning over the support of these local corporate groups or these chiefs. They were exploitive in nature and enjoyed major portion in the agricultural production claiming the ownership of land.

As shown from the inscriptional records, one can understand that the right over land, rights over taxes from the lands and rights over irrigation were probably held by different people (Chart-3, No.73). The general assumption about the medieval state that the all the land of the region belongs to the state or the ruler have right over the entire territory may not be applicable here, because in one inscription the king is said to have

purchased land from a local person before he granted it to a temple (Chart-3, No.277). While in some cases, the king has directed or ordered local assemblies to allocate land to temple or brahmana, in several instances local assemblies seem to have taken independent decision.

2.3 Revenue Collection

The emergence of composite ruling classes with their corporate assemblies such as *nadu*, *sabha* and *nagaram* were evidently possible not just because of the radical transformation in the mode of production, but also due to the well-developed mechanism to extract beyond the surplus in the production occasionally. All production activities either cultivation or other, such as trade, breeding, local traditional industries, weaving, etc., were subjected to taxation. Attempts were made to appropriate as much as possible from the hands of *kudi*, which consisted of a mass of small-scale cultivators, tenant cultivators, landless labourers and other occupational groups. The corporate assemblies, the *nadu*, *nagaram* and the *sabha*, which sometime acted as state and other times as agents, intermediaries or officialdom, to the state were able to serve the interests of the local ruling elites, the landlords, the traders and the brahmans. Kongu region which maintained its own distinguished material and political culture was never a full-fledged part of any of the state systems, say the Pandyas, the Cholas and Hoysalas, though these neighbouring states always attempted to extend their power over this region. Therefore, the mechanism for extracting the surplus production and/or the system of taxation cannot particularly be attributed to the any of these neighbouring states. For example, if one analyses the inscriptions collected from Atthur, they have been dated with the regnal years of the rulers belonging to at least three dynasties, i.e., the Cholas, Pandyas and the Hoysalas. Apparently within a short span of time, Atthur had come under the power of different dynastic rulers and thus different state systems. And the income from the village could have been directed to these states or its agents without much alteration in the existing system. Therefore it would be appropriate to say that the region transferred into a state society and polity, without particularly belonging to any of these states, state society without state. Though the divisions of the ruler and the ruled became very clear, the region did not fit itself into any of the political structure that existed outside the region. In such state, the corporate assemblies particularly the *nadu* played a major role in channalizing the flow of surplus to the ruling classes. Here, it is important to note that the *nadu* itself is the institution of ruling class vested with enormity of power in almost

all local affairs. In the following section, it will be discussed how the Kongu region as a whole came under one political unit with the emergence the *Konattan* chiefs (also called Kongu Chola).

The land, whether under private or communal landholding, was subjected to pay certain taxes. The production from the land was divided at least into three kinds of shares: the cultivators' share, holders' share and the state's share (here state would also mean the agencies like *nadu*, *sabha* and *nagaram*). Unless there was any special instruction from the superior agencies (for example from the king or the corporate assemblies), the holders of the land including the temple had to pay taxes. It is quite obvious from the nature of the land donation. The cultivable land has been donated to temple, Brahmans and others who were attached to temple. If the land is donated, the responsibility of paying the tax over land is also transferred to the donee. In some cases, the donor will bear the responsibility to pay taxes of donated land. In some cases, there would be instructions from the state to defray all taxes over donated land. Thus the land becomes *iraili* (tax free). The holder of *iraili* land can enjoy all income from the land, except the cultivator or tenant's share. If the whole village is given as tax free, the grantee is entitled to receive the state's share as well as landholder's share in production. In such cases, land always remained with cultivators (tenants). Here the transaction simply would mean transfer of the state share, often known as *melvaram* to the grantee. In light of inscriptions, it seems that the donated land can be obtained back, or if the land was given as *iraili* or tax free, that can again be brought back to taxation system (Chart-3, No.48).

In order to understand the authority that had power to levy and collect taxes, the epigraphic clues need to be carefully analyzed. A few inscriptions that inform about the collection of taxes from primary producers may not help us to study the nature of existing taxation system. However, a considerable number of inscriptions record the donation of *iraili* (tax free) land. The personage or institutions that had power to exempt the donated land from taxes would be considered as authority to levy taxes as well.

To discuss this aspect let us begin with Atthur. In the village Arakazhur of Atthur block more than twenty inscriptions register the *iraili* land donations. Some of these inscriptions are dated with the regnal years of the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Hoysalas, while others mention about local chiefs or state representatives. The documents dated with the Cholas and the Pandya rulers have been signed by persons

such as *vizhupatharayan* and *vanakovaraiyan* (in case of Cholas), and *pandiyamandalathu ganapathi alvan kaduvetti* and *uraikudi udaiyan* (in case of Pandyas). In one inscription, a king, Thirupuvana Chakravarti Konerinmai Kondan, is said to have given *iraili* land in which names of these above signatories are not found. Similarly, eight inscriptions do not have regnal year and name of any rulers, but the name of the signatories have been inscribed in them. Sometimes these inscriptions use these names of signatories in place of rulers.

Altogether, we have three categories of inscriptions with regard to *iraili* donation. First, inscriptions record the order of the king without any middle agency, second inscriptions with regnal year of rulers with aforesaid signatories name and third, inscriptions with the name of signatories but without mentioning any rulers. Apart from these, we have another inscription in which *nattavar* (member of *nadu*) of Atthur Nadu have donated *iraili kudineenka devadanam*. *Periyanattu velan* has signed this document. Though it is very difficult to pinpoint the real authority that possessed power to free the land from taxes, one can ascertain the highhandedness of the local chiefs. We have already referred to an inscription in which there was an agreement reached by four individual chiefs having the title of *rayan* with their personal names. One among them was Vanakovaraiyan. If we connect this Vanakovaraiyan with the one in the aforesaid signatories, then we can be able to say they were local chiefs or landlords sometime acted as agent of state and other time as independent chiefs. As stated earlier, the *nattar* and *periya nattar* also come under this middle group who had enormous power in local affairs. This middle group was presumably rested with the power of taxation and tax remission in Atthur. Similar nature can be seen in all other parts as well. Almost all inscriptions collected from Thiruchencodu, Salem, Namakkal and Rasipuram have documented the donation of tax-free lands by the either members of the local assemblies or powerful chiefs. In Omalur bloc, the Tharamankala Mudalikal (local chiefs) seems to be very powerful. The chiefs had exercised enormous power in political as well as economic sphere.

Table 4: References to Tax Terminology and their spatial distribution

No	Revenue terms	Place	Reference
1	<i>ponvari, irai</i>	Atthur	No.6
2	<i>ponvari, aya</i>		No.7
3	<i>Ponvari, kadamai, ayam</i>	Atthur	No.9
4	<i>ponvari, kasayavarkam, ayam, nattuviniyokam,</i>	Atthur	No.22

	<i>kanikkai, samatham</i>		
5	<i>ponvari, kasayam, kathikai pachai, usivasi, mathirusandhi, nalleruthu, narpasu, veliaruthu, kanikkai, nattu viniyokam, alamanji devai, ayam</i>	Atthur	No. 24
6	<i>ponvari, kasayam, kathikaipachai, nalleruthu, narpasu, usivasi, mathirusandhu, kasayankal, thariyirai, manirai, cekkirai, attirai pattam</i>	Atthur	No.25
7	<i>Ponvari, kasaym, kathikai pachai, nalleruthu, narpasu, ayam</i>	Atthur	No.26
8	<i>ayam, alamanji devai, irai</i>	Atthur	No.28
9	<i>kadamai, ponvari, kasaya kathikai pachai, mathiri, sathu, nalleruthu, narpasu, urkankku, jevitham, pathi alamanji devai, yercoru, ayam, urumai, neru urmai, kal urumai</i>	Atthur	No.29
10	<i>ponvari, kasayam, kathikaipatchai, alamnji devai, irai</i>	Atthur	No.30
11	<i>vari, kadamai kal (measurement)</i>		No.48
12	<i>Kadamai</i>	Namakkal	No.65
13	<i>Sekkirai</i>	Namakkal	no.70
14	<i>kathikai pachai, mathari sadhai, alamanji, ayam,</i>	Atthur	No.98
15	<i>alamanji</i>	Atthur	No.99
16	<i>ponvari, ayam</i>	Atthur	No.103
17	<i>ponvari, kasayam, kathikaipachai, mathirusandhi, usivasi, nalleruthu, narpasu, ayam, amamnji devai</i>	Atthur	No.104
18	<i>Ayam</i>	Atthur	No.105
19	<i>kadamai, kasakadayam, panjupeeli, snadhuvikirkam, vasalviniyokam, kanikkai kattikai pachai, adipurap pachai, pillayar nonpu devai, anaiasalai, kudhirapnadhi, karualthalvu, thachualvu, thariyirai, sekkirai, thattoli, thattarpattam, pasipattam, ozhukku neer meen pattam, tholottu, yervari, inavari, vasalvari, alvari, nalleruthu, narpasu, kanam</i>	Omalur	No.110
20	<i>kadamai, ponvari, karpuraviniyokam, maravadai, punpayir, thariyirai, cekkirai, thattoli, thattarpattam, yervari, invari, idaivari, erimeenpattam, kanikkai, kathikaipachai, nalleruthu, narpasu, panjupili, olai yezhthu, viniyokam, vasalperu, ilanchinai peru, vetti al devai, thachu devai, anachsalai, kudhirai pandhi, iraikal</i>	Thiruchenkodu	No.134
21	<i>nathavari, manrupadu, thentakurram, iraipuravu, cirrayam</i>	Avinasi	No.192
22	<i>vari, yelavai, kurrathendam, karvarkam</i>	Avinasi	No.202
23	<i>iraipuravu, cirrayam, yelavai, ukavai, manrupadu, thendakkurram, sumai sunkam sarikai</i>	Coimbatore	No.264
24	<i>iraivari, cirrayam, manrupadu, thendakurram, irai</i>	Coimbatore	No.368
25	<i>manrupadu, thendakkurram</i>	Coimbatore	No.373
26	<i>sunkam, sarikai</i>	Coimbatore	No.374
27	<i>sunkam, sarikai</i>	Coimbatore	No.375
28	<i>sunkam, sarikai, irai</i>	Coimbatore	No.377

29	<i>kadamai, yelavai, ukavai, kudimaipadu</i>	Coimbatore	No.380
30	<i>kudimaipadu, kadamai</i>	Coimbatore	No.383
31	<i>yelavai, ukavai, ayam</i>	Coimbatore	No.427
32	<i>padikaval</i>	Coimbatore	No.434

The tabe-4 gives the list of inscriptions with regard to taxation. From these thirty-three inscriptions, we find around sixty-four odd tax terminologies. We can classify these revenue terms based on James Heitzmen's categorization. Altogether they can be grouped into twelve categories.

1. **General tax terms:** *ayavarkam, varkam, peru vari* and *vari*.
2. **Land-tax:** *irai, kanikatan, kadamai, punsey kadamai*, etc.,.
2. **Money taxes:** *ayam, kacayam, kacu kadamai, kacu varkam* and *pon vari*.
3. **Labour dues:** *alamanji, amanji, arruk kal amanji, cutti, cutti irai, muttaiyal, erikkati, nirkinavaru, nirpacci, nirvilai, nirvilaikkacu, pattikatikati, varka kanam, vark kuli, ulavu irai, vetti* and *viniyokam*.
4. **Intermediary cesses:** *antarayam, cillirai, civari, cirrirai, corruk kurru nel, coru, coru mattu, eccoru, kurrarici, kudimai, pancavaram* and *tantatil kadamai*.
5. **Temple cesses:** *maci, kanikkai, kathikaippachai, pup pon, tinkatcoru, vacar kacu* and *velik kacu*.
6. **Occupational cesses:** *attuk kirai, caliyat tari, cekku katamai, eri meen pattam, erppon, erumaip pon, kutirai vari, mavatai, pattam, tari irai, tari kadamai, tarip pon, tarip putavai, thattar pattam, tirai vari, uppuk kacu* and *vellai vari*.
7. **Tolls:** *cunkam*.
8. **Protection:** *Ciru padikaval* and *padikaval*.
9. **Legal:** *kurra thendam, pati kurram* and *thenda kurram*.
10. **Poll:** *inavari, per kadamai* and *taniyal*.

As stated earlier, the frequency of revenue terms is higher in economically developed zones, particularly the fertile areas. Most of the inscriptions from dry zones do not give elaborate details about the taxation, while they do mention certain taxes. There is also a slight difference in the usages of the revenue terms in the Pandyas, Cholas and Kongu Cholas influenced areas. Terms like *ayam*, *irai*, and *vari* were general tax terms mentioned irrespective of regions. However, they had been in frequent usages in eastern and southern side (Salem, Atthur, Namakkal, Thiruchenkodu, Omalur and Rasipuram). Similarly *kadamai*, as a land tax as basic sources for the state, is seen in all regions but its frequency is high in southern and eastern regions. *Kadamai* was paid in kind in the form of all agricultural productions. *Irai* had been used sometime in place of *kadamai*, since both were basically meant to land tax. *Ayam*, *kasayam* and *ponvari* were paid in cash. *Ponvari*, a tax in gold, is absent in upper north

and western part of Kongu (Coimbatore, Udumalaipettai and Avinasi) but the term appears in number of times in other part of the Kongu region. Reference to the term *kudimai* (cess from inhabitants or *kudimakkal*) appears more in regions where the dominance of local chiefs, the Kongu Cholas was high. *Kudimai* is always mentioned with the suffix *padu*. It is also same in the case of terms such as *cungam* and *sarikai*, probably general term for the tolls. *Kadamai* and *kudipadu* were generic terms for various taxes for land and cultivators. *Cirrayam* and *peruvai*, probably some special taxes, were respectively meant small tax and big tax. *Nallerudu*, *narpasu* and *idaivai* were taxes on livestock. Artisan communities like drummers, goldsmith, carpenter, weavers, handloom weavers, oil merchants and paraiyas were respectively levied tax of *thattoli*, *thattarpattam*, *tachu devai*, *panju pili*, *tari irai*, *sekkirai* and *parai irai*. *Cumai* and *cungam* are other categories of taxes, which are often mentioned in the inscriptions of Coimbatore region. A few inscriptions empower tax collectors to collect revenue forcefully if necessary. It shows that people had to suffer with the burden of over taxation.

3. Political Unification and Ideological legitimization

Studying political system of a peripheral region is unusually a complex subject. Attempts to study it by relating with the political development of plain region overshadowed the local political processes that were developing within the region. It was obvious in the south Indian history that the region under study was able to maintain its own identity by not being completely assimilated into the political process emerged in other parts. The reasonable advancement in the agrarian production made viable for the formation of a stable political set-up in plain. However, it was quite contrary in Kongu where the kind of unstable material condition prevailed for quite long time till the 10th century CE. The states in the plain region always tried to win over the support of the Kongu chiefs to use men in their army since they were known for their bravery in warfare and lived in a kind of heroic obsession. However, situated in the tails of the two fertile basins, the Kaveri and the Vaikai, it always had the impact of the political situation that developed in these river valleys. Thus the Chola state in the Kaveri region and the Pandya state in the Vaigai region indeed contributed immensely to the development of local political process. As discussed, comparatively small and arid zones of Kongu had segmented into multiple sub-regions, which were controlled and ruled by

the chiefs who had kin and tribal affinity with their subjects. These chiefs had hereditary interest in warfare. In fact such heroic activities and training in warfare brought them not only fame, but also a method to legitimize their power. Therefore, in the context of Kongu, the legitimization of political power did not owe much to the material advantage of the rulers whereas the personal heroic activities were considered much. This was probably the reason why most of the early chiefs always engaged in warfare. With this ceaseless warfare and strong tribal affinity there were less possibility for any kind of political unification. Similarly, in addition to this uncertain political situation, the social development was also not upto that level in order to provide a favourable condition for the development of the state. One can also see in the history of Kongu that no chieftain family retained the ruling status for considerable time period. During the classical period, except Adiyaman whose son was also said to be a chief, none of the chieftain families continued to survive for more than two generations. Even the political situation during the post-classical age was not marked with any development of state or larger chieftdom. On the contrary, the ideology of heroism began to percolate deep into the local level. The numerous hero stone inscriptions of the 6th to 10th century CE ascribe the tension and ceaseless warfare among the local kin groups.

One major reason that can be noted while comparing the situation with other fertile regions of south India is that the rulers of plain region managed to legitimize their power through religious ideology. In general, the process of legitimization occurred in multiple ways which include establishment of state religion, state deities, state priesthood, state values-ideology, state myth and legend, state ritual and ceremony for investiture in office, veneration of state sacrifice etc., propaganda and celibacy.²⁴ This mechanism was followed in all early states that depended highly on religion as an effective tool in legitimizing the authority of ruling class and creating a public sphere in which culturally and socially varying communities can be united. It was initiated by the Pallava state and later effectively followed by the Chola State. With the effect of recent scholarly developments in studying the Chola state, one can hardly deny the role of religious ideology attached with highly complicated brahminical rituals provided a gaining ground for the establishment of the Chola state. Therefore, instead of the cohesive forces, the stability of the Chola state relied more upon the ideological

²⁴ Conald V. Kurtz, 'Legitimation of Early Inchoate States', in Henri J.M. Claessen and S. Peter Skalnik (ed), *The Study of the State*, Mouton Publications, The Hague, 1981, p.185.

legitimization. The promotion of the *brahmadeya* settlements and the construction of monumental temples were the two processes, which assisted the ideological legitimization of the Cholas. In addition to the closeness with brahmins and their institutions, bearing long titles and lineage attachment with imagined ancestors, initially convinced the local communities to accept the power of the Cholas. And in due course of time, the local chiefs began copying the Cholas' model of legitimization. Most of them started to use titles and donate ardently to brahmins and initiated temple constructions at local level. The imaginary public sphere created by the Cholas eased the local chiefs to build their legitimacy upon it. Using titles and names of the Cholas brought them two methods of legitimization. First of all, they were able to show that they were close to the Cholas or enjoy powerful alliance with them. Secondly, by using Cholas' title and their name, they were able to project that they were equal to them. Similarly, they were able to differentiate their status from the ordinary people so as to establish their right to rule.

In the political context, since ancient days the Kongu region had been a land ruled by various families of chiefs till the 13th century CE and it had never been a full-fledged territorial part of any major dynasties of South India in spite of their constant effort to control. The power of the external rulers not only existed for a shortwhile but also did not make much impact on the local affairs of the people. From the beginning of the 10th century, there was an independent chieftain family called *konattan* chieftains, also known as Kongu Cholas, who ruled the region till the 13th century CE. Indeed it was the period when the region witnessed the emergence of a full-fledged state society and polity.

The identification of the genuine ruler of Kongu is indeed a tough task that needs a detailed analysis. As stated, the rulers of plain region, right from the beginning of the classical period, tried to control the chiefs of the highlands. Similarly, there were also internal processes through which the tribal leaders always tried to legitimize their power by demonstrating their genealogical relation with the rulers of plains. Therefore, the contemporary records often bear the names and regnal years of those rulers. It often leads to a misperception that they were under the control of those rulers. It became much more complicated during the Chola period. There were certain possibilities that the Cholas somehow managed to exercise their power in at least certain parts of the Kongu region, particularly northeast region. Inscriptional records of the Cholas,

particularly the early Chola rulers, have been collected from Kongu, which attest the Cholas' consistent attempts to intrude into the political affairs of the Kongu. With this effect some portion of the region fell into the hands of the Chola. The primary interest of the Chola attempts to conquer the regions is to use its demographical importance in form of the mercantile activities of traders in Chola region. Secondly, since the agrarian production had at the time not developed enough to feed the rulers, the mineral wealth of the region might have enticed the rulers. An inscription of Parantakan I records that the Chola brought gold from the Kongu country in order to roof his newly constructed temple at Chidambaram. It illustrates that the intention of the conqueror was not to annex the region with his territory but to plunder their wealth. Inscriptions dated with the regnal years of Rajarajan, Rajendiran I, Kulotunkan II and I have been found in different parts of the Kongu. Like the Cholas, the Pandyas of Madurai also exercised influence in the south western part of the Kongu. Inscriptions of Pandya rulers have been collected from these regions.

Can the rulers of the Chola and Pandyas be identified as the real rulers of Kongu? The answer to this question may go against the existing perceptions that the region was once under the complete sway of these rulers, or at least under the Cholas. Most of the studies that aim to construct the political history of the Kongu fail to study the independent development of the local political process. The Kongu chiefs tried to legitimize their power by adopting the model of the political set up that existed in the plain regions. However, obsession over pastoralism and tribal way of life did not favour the emergence of any stable political society or the state society. The new developments and the settlement of the *vettuvās* and *vellalas*, relative transformation to an agrarian economy, influx of various social groups from different parts of South India, etc., yielded wider possibilities for the political unification from the 10th century onwards.

There are at least three ways in which the traditional local cults were happened to come out from their local traditional way of life to be a part of the larger political system, which proposed a new unifying cultural and religious set-up, accommodating or giving new meaning to the already existing tribal religious institutions. Firstly, the new technological development in exploiting natural resources and change towards agrarian mode of production invited huge institutional changes in the traditional tribal society. Secondly, the immigration of people of different social and cultural practices from established state societies caused the penetration of other cultural practices and

institutions which were considered high and their followers civilized. Therefore, it initiated a considerable alteration in traditional tribal set-up at the ground level. The process through people to people contact that began after the Sangam period went up to the Middle Ages. The third process was indeed important that is the introduction of state religion with the motive of political legitimization and unification. The state values and ideology were spread through the institution of the state religion. State tried to enhance its power and its right to rule by supporting and propagating the state religion. Not just enforcing the state religion did the unification of different tribal communities into single religious and cultural pattern took place. Rather, several local practices were also incorporated. However, the purpose and motive of the state religion was strictly upheld. Therefore, the introduction of state religion created a tendency among the local communities in which the attachment with the state religion was projected as a way of empowerment and upgrading their social status. It finally led to the break up of the clan bonds and embarking upon the new social system. The state was able to sustain as long as it received support from the local communities in keeping them within the domain of their state ideology. In this case, the state religion played a greater role than the state forces.

The ideological legitimization by introducing state religion was done by the Pallavas, the Pandyas and more successfully by the Cholas. Though these rulers tried to spread their political values and ideology through supporting their state religion in Kongu, it did not yield any sustainable benefit to these states. But the independent chieftain family called *konattan* chiefs, (also known as the Kongu Cholas) were partially successful in borrowing the political ideology of the other states and effectively utilizing it in political unification and accelerating the process of state formation into a full-fledged state society. One among the *konattan* chieftains has been mentioned in an inscription. He has brought two parts (two traditional divisions of Kongu) of Kongu into his control. It was only during his rule that the region came under one political set up in its entire history.

There are many theses with regard to the origin of the *konattan* lineage. Though none of them seem to be convincing, the idea of connecting their origin with Irrukuvells lineage can be considered more relevant than the others.²⁵ The analysis of *konattan* genealogy shows that the erstwhile ruling class developed as a parallel to that of Cholas

²⁵ V. Manikkam, *Kongu Nadu (upto. 1400 AD)*, Vol 1&2, Makkal Veliedu, Chennai, 2001, p.199.

in Kaveri region. It often leads the scholar to view that they were feudatory chiefs of the Chola state. The first in the line of *konattan* family is said to have been appointed to look after the affairs of the region by Aditya I, the first known ruler of the Chola family. However, there is no concrete evidences either in the inscriptions or any other sources to show them that they were subordinated by the rulers of the Chola family. On the other hand if one studies the evolution of political system in Kongu, the emergence of *konattan* ruling class seems to be a more natural development and it was indeed the need of the time, as the socio-economic formation of the region enters into a new phase. *Konattan* rulers were the only rulers whose rule, for the first time in Kongu history, lasted for a considerable period almost as the rule of the Cholas of south India. These chiefs, starting from Vikarama Chola, gradually began to control the local communities probably by force at the initial stage and introducing Chola model of state in Kongu.

At the beginning of the *konattan* rule, the bordering regions of Kongu were still under the influence of the Chola and the Pandya rulers. As Kongu rulers consolidated their power by various means, they were able to bring all parts of Kongu under their sway. The confusion over linking the *konattan* ruling family with the Cholas is mainly due to the similarities in their names and titles. Like the Cholas of Kaveri regions, the Kongu rulers also had their name like Vikrama Chola, Rajendra Chola, Veera Rajendara, Uthama Chola, etc. Moreover, they also had special titles of the Cholas such as *rajakesari* and *parakesari*. There are more than thousand inscriptions in Kongu, which belong to the 11th to 13th century CE. Most of them have been dated with the regnal years of rulers of these two lines. Therefore, it is difficult to identify the ruler mentioned in the inscriptions as to which ruling family they belonged. The issue further gets complicated when another category of inscriptions which probably indicate another line of local rulers whose names are also similar to the *konattan* rulers and the Cholas of Kaveri region. Therefore, the question of the real rulers of Kongu and the centre of political setup needs to be reconstructed by giving much emphasis upon the local political process, which at the time of Cholas, was represented by an independent ruling class of *konattan* family. Another noteworthy point here is that, even if one considers the *konattans* as real rulers of the region, they cannot be considered as the sole representatives of ruling class.

The ruling class emerged at various levels of the political systems. For example, the *urar*, *nattar*, *periyannattar*, etc., can also be part of the ruling class since the local

communities were under their full sovereignty. The attempts of *konattans* to consolidate their powers were also more or less same like those of the Cholas. They had to win over the support of local ruling classes by embarking upon the religious ideological propagation. In fact, the ideological legitimization was employed in multiple ways to bring the divergent heterogeneous local communities into their control. First of all, by using same names and titles of powerful rulers, such as the Cholas and the Pandyas, they were able to project their royal connections, which reduced the local level of antagonism to their right to rule. Once it was achieved, there was intrusion of state ideologies and values in the local level and thus it created a new socio-economic order in using which the rulers were legitimately able to collect the surplus and distribute them according to their wish. The newly developed material advantages further strengthened the power of the rulers. Secondly, like all other medieval states, the *konattan* chiefs of Kongu took their religious ideology as an effective means for the consolidation of their rule. They initiated and supported intrusion of Brahminism by facilitating the brahminical settlements and generously donating to temple construction and other temple-centered activities. The spread of religion was effectively able to kindle the collective mentality of the people and brought them together. Being a sole supporter and protector of the state religion, the rulers were able to sustain their power. The complicated rituals for each religious activities from selection of suitable land for temple construction to the items should be offered at the time of *puja*, brought by the Brahmanism, intimating that the rituals were not only beyond the understanding of the ordinary people but they also required a specialized knowledge. The projection of complex religious practices extended the social distance between the layman and those who had knowledge in religious rituals. Another way of maintaining the social distance and power relations was narrowing the social distance with the religious group that posed to possess specialized knowledge in such religious practices and becoming patron of the religion. Therefore, converting the faith of the mass over one religion and propagating, as a chief patron of the religion was an indirect way for the legitimization of power. The rulers at different levels invariably practiced this way of legitimization. When the rulers at the central level, in this context, the *konattan*, began to follow patronizing religion and brahmins as way of legitimization, the practice was immediately localized. Leaders and chiefs of tribal groups, wealthy peasants, traders, etc embarked upon this practice as a means of widening the social distance and upholding the political power within their locality. Thus by legitimizing their power, they legitimized the authority of the chief patron, the

ruler at the central level. It helped the rulers at the central level to convert these local rulers as state functionaries. The network between central rulers and those of local level was operated through temple. The temple became a centre of both religion and administration. Rulers at the central level were able to uphold their power as long as they could remain as a chief patron and effectively manage the temple-centered network. Thus, emerged ruling class, which further internally divided local, intermediate and central based on their power. At each level the process of ideological legitimization was effectively executed. Thus the chiefs (the newly emerged ruling class) at intermediate and local levels began to imitate the rulers at the central level in all aspects. As mentioned, the acceptance of central practices was to generally not to accept the authority of the central rulers, but to legitimate the power of the chiefs at local level and to gain the support of local social groups. And finally, the third way of legitimization in Kongu was carried through the propaganda of the benevolent nature of the ruler.

4. The Power Structure: Institutions of Exploitation

The diversion of the whole range of surplus into the hands of a few could have been impossible if an effective exploitative institutional mechanism was not functional. It helped not only to extract a high share in production but also to maintain the social distance between the rulers and the ruled. The category of rulers in Kongu society had a composite nature being comprised of various sections including wealthy landlords, military chiefs, traders, and brahmans. In general, at least three different layers can be seen. The *urar*, *nattar*, *nagarattar*, and *sabhayar* constituted as a body of rulers at local level. Among them, except *sabhayars* (members of *sabha*, brahman assembly) all other was either rich peasants or dominant merchants. Next to them, there were individual titleholders, who seem to be a part of state officialdom sometime and local ruler or chief in other time. But this second layer in the power structure is often not clear. The regional rulers of Kongu, the Kongu Cholas, in particular, constituted to the third layer. Adopting the model of Chola state, they extended their authority over the aforesaid local level power holders. In addition to this internal pattern, the rulers of plain regions such as the Cholas and the Pandyas, now and then, extended their hold over some part of the Kongu region.

In this section, our prime concern is to study the institutions of local rulers (first and second categories) and their relation with those at the central level. Discussion

begins with the functions and power of local assemblies and their managerial role at local level. Here, the specific role of *ur*, *nadu*, *nagaram* and *sabha* assemblies and their political integration with the state will be taken for discussion. At the end, there will be a brief analysis on the personal names and titles found mentioned in the inscriptions. The personal names, whether they were donors or receivers, sellers or buyers, administrators or servants, king or chief, can be considered as part of the ruling class, enjoyed privileged position and exercised enormous power within their locality. Therefore, such analysis will provide more clues to understand the power structure during the study period.

Recently, *nadu* has become a starting point for any discussion that deals with the structure of medieval south Indian state. A detailed study on *nadu* undertaken by Y. Subbarayalu provided a base for a number of other studies.²⁶ Using this as base, the functional aspect of *nadu* was brought into a serious debate by Burton Stein who challenged the previous tendency to characterize *nadu* merely as an administrative division of state. Burton Stein and his American colleagues, Kennath Hall and W.G.Spencer, tried to focus upon the natural development of the Nadu monopolized and administered by the dominant peasant community of the locality.²⁷ They tried to study the power and local autonomy of the *nattar*, the representative of *nadu* and the inability of the Chola state in extending its political authority over it.²⁸ Stein's purpose to enquire *nadu* was to study how it was integrated to the State system of the Cholas—to him it was done through ritual hegemony rather than political, thus the state became integration of several segmented power units (the *nadu*). Slightly contradicting to Stein's view, but completely rejecting the notions of Nilakanta Sastri, Hall looks at the economic role of *nadu*. To him it is an 'organic centre of the developing peasant economy'. Thus it was a 'local marketing territory' and its economic functions are primary than all others like administrative, even religious, kinship etc.²⁹ *Nadu* cannot be taken simply as an administrative devise made for the convenience of imperial regime (the Chola). Rather treating *nadu* as a uniform category, the aspect of regional variation in the nature and function of *nadu* needs to be stressed. Before entering into further discussion, let us see some examples giving references to *nadu* assembly in the Kongu region.

²⁶ Y.Subbarayalu, *Political Geography of the Chola Country*, Madras University, Madras, 1973.

²⁷ George W. Spencer, *The Politics of Expansion, The Chola Conquest of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya*, New Era Publication, Madras, 1983, p.20.

²⁸ Kennath Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of Colas*, Elmira, New York, 1978, p.187.

²⁹ Ibid.

1. Due to the dispute between *nagarattar* and *chetty*, the temple festival got delayed. *Nattar* of Arrur Nadu intervened and arranged the temple festival by donating *kudineenka devadana iraili* land to the temple (Chart-3, No. 20).
2. In Namakkal, a female donor had deposited two *kazhanju* to the *nattar* of Kollimalai Nadu in order to spend it for the purpose of lighting in temple (Chart-3, No. 59).
3. Vayalur of Kollimalai Nadu used to pay certain amount of paddy to the temple. Due to some reasons it was stopped. *Nattar* along with temple administrators took initiatives thereby *urar* of Vayalur agreed to continue the payment to the temple (Chart-3, No. 62).
4. Maliyala *nattar* of Kollimalai Nadu decided to pay certain amount of grains to temple (Chart-3, No. 63).
5. Narkaveri Nadazhvan Desi Alaprantan Mumudi Chola Chakravartiana Ankarayan donated land (Chart-3, No. 136).
6. The *nadu*, *sabha* and *nagaram* of Yezhur Nadu donated *iraili* land to a brahman who was working in temple (Chart-3, No. 137).
7. The king donated land to the temple. The *nadu*, *sabha* and *nagaram* of Yezhur Nadu executed it (Chart-3, No. 138).
8. A village was donated to a healer by *nadu* and *nagaram* of Yezhur Nadu (Chart-3, No. 139).
9. *Nattar* of Puvaniya Nadu donated a *devadana* village to the temple in *satuverdimangalam* (Chart-3, No. 160).
10. Members of *nadu*, *nagaram* and *sabha* directed that the *ur* of Cukkanpoondi should pay one *panam* per *kudi* (Chart-3, No. 167).
11. *Puluva nattar* of Vadaparisa Nadu agreed to pay the taxes collected from *puluva kudikal* to the temple.
12. Vellala *nattavar* and *Puluva nattavar* of Vadparisa Nadu donated *devadana iraili* land. (*nattu kanakku manniurandan yezhuthu*) (Chart-3, No.246).
13. Kalimukan's inscription, reference to Konadu, the donor has constructed *kinaru*.
14. Mention of *saturvedimangalathu nattar* (Chart-3, No.458).
15. Details about the *padi* of temple functionaries. *Sivirapathirar*, *muthirathar*, *nattu thanatharum*, *spathan thankuvarum*, *kavari pinakkum* etc. Mention of *samakattar* (soldier) and *mahesvarar* (Chart-3, No.382).
16. The relation between *ur* and *nagaram* (Chart-3, No.372).
17. Administration of *devadana* land (Chart-3, No.373).
18. *Vellala nattar* and *Puluva nattar* of Vadaparisnadu donated land and all taxes from the land to the temple (Chart-3, No.229).
19. *Nattar* and Kandiyadevar of Vadapooovaniya Nadu donated a village, Moganapalli, to temple.
20. *Sabhayar*, *nagarattar* and *nattar* of Rasipuram Nadu fixed the taxes to be paid by those who resided in Temple Tirumadivalakam, fined those who committed crime and allowed the *kaikolar* and *devaradiyar* to sell and mortgage their land, which was allotted for them in Tirumadivalakam (Chart-3, No. 380).
21. *Nattar* of Kollimalainadu made certain arrangements and thus the temple share (in paddy) from Vayalur that was in due for long time could be collected. (Chart-3, No. 462).

At least three aspects of *nadu* can be discussed from available inscriptional records. First of all, *nadu* was a natural peasant territory and dominated by wealthy peasant communities. It consisted of many villages and it was called by the name of one of these villages. An inscription, which deals with a donation by *nattar* of Poovaniya *Nadu*, was signed by *nattars* who belonged to different villages within the *nadu* (Chart-3, No. 396). The signatories were Kadantharka Mudaliyar of Amarakunru, Anayar Mudali of Dharamankalam, Alapiranthar Mudali of Cemmanikudal, Pillaiyappan Mudali of Ganapathi Nallur, Ilamandai Chokkanayan of Cettamankuruchi, Kudiyan Andai Pillaiyappan of Mupavvai Samudram, Seyya Kunra Kamundan of Maramankalam, and Ilaman Perumal Kamundan of Vellarai Palli. The *nattar* comprised of peasant chiefs belonging to different villages had the title such as *mudali* and *kamundan*. Presumably divergent factors involved in integrating several villages to particular *nadu* system. First of all, the kinship and marital relations among the dominant land holding families helped mutual collaboration and possible confederation of various villages. Secondly, the temple integrated several village communities, irrespective of their ethnicity. Each *nadu* had at least a temple, big or small, generally constructed by the locally influential people who aspired for power and status. Being part of temple festival and worship was projected as a moral duty of the people. And finally, making access to irrigation resources also brought peasant communities of different villages to *nadu*. Vadaparisa *Nadu*, for example, had two assemblies representing two ethnic groups, *puluva nattar* and *vellala nattar* (Chart-3, No.246). On certain occasions, the members of these two assemblies functioned together while in several cases they acted independently (Chart-3, No. 200). The important consideration here is the ethnicity of the member.

Secondly, being an assembly of peasant territory, *nadu* was dominated by powerful peasants who controlled and carried out the *nadu* administration. Any supra *nadu* level institution had minimum impact over the monopoly of *nattar*. The *nattar* were holders of large agricultural tracts, which often consisted of several villages. Though they have been represented equally with *sabhayar* and *nagarattar*, presumably the power of the *nattar* supercedes the rest. Among the others, the *nadu* and its member *nattar* had special functions to make irrigational arrangements, tax collection, and dispute settlements. When the subjects were related to temple or temple city, *nadu* had

to function with the cooperation of *nagaram* and *sabha*. While discussing about the nature and function of *nadu* assembly in plain regions of south India and hilly regions like Kongu and Karnataka, it is said that in these upland regions the assembly acted with a single chieftainship. For example, Stein says 'locality governance varied in the Chola macro region. In the central portion of the Kaveri basin and Thondaimandalam, the *nattar* seemed to operate as an assembly without a single, local, executive chief, whereas in southern Karnataka and Kongu, the interior, upland tracts of the macro region—*nadu* chieftainships prevailed'.³⁰ However, though in some instances we come across some *nattars* names being mentioned as a chief or head, generally the *nattar* are represented collectively. Nilakanta Sastri is of the opinion that the assembly *nadu* had a regular representation of influential members from each village. But it seems that *nadu* did not have any organized set up giving equal representation to each village. *Nattar* in nature were community leaders and big landholders. For example *puluva nattar*, *vellala nattar*, *vettuva nattar*, etc., are identified with their respective communities.

Much more complicated is the relation of *nadu* with supra-*nadu* level institutions. Basically there was hardly any effective system that controlled the monopoly of *nattar*. There are few references to *periyannadu* and *valannadu*, however the exact role of these divisions is yet to be known. To go by the view of Kenneth Hall, the competition between *nattar* and *nagarattar* and the attempt of Chola State to dismantle the monopoly of the *nattar* propelled the *nattar* to form supra-*nadu* assembly *periyannadu* (larger *nadu*). Probably it would have been a confederation of several *nadu* assemblies. Since the *nagarattar* got connected with several supra-*nadu* level merchant's guilds, particularly with those of itinerant traders, it would have necessitated them to organize *periyannadu*.

How far the king was able to intervene in the local affairs of Nadu? As stated earlier, though the Kongu society and polity transferred into state in the process of societal evolution, it never became part of any of the state system effectively for a considerable time span. Within a short period the influence of several dynastic rulers including the Cholas, the Pandyas, Hoysalas, and Kongu Cholas was alternatively imparted upon the region. Except the Kongu Cholas, actually known as *konattan chiefs*, all others ruled from outside the region. The *konattan* chiefs emerged as powerful ruling

³⁰ Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, pp.311-317.

chieftains and took the model of Chola and the Pandya state and ruled the region for almost three centuries. It was for the first time that major part of Kongu was ruled by an independent chieftain family for considerable time. More than three hundred inscriptions of these ruling families have been collected. Last two rulers of this dynasty are praised to have had ruled two Kongu (north and south, a division based on the flow of the river Kaveri) together. In addition to this chieftain family, there were also other chiefs ruling different pockets of the region. Since all these rulers had same titles, special names, etc., there is a great deal of confusion in identifying who is the king. Therefore, when we discuss the relation between *nadu* and the king, the king would mean a ruler from any of these dynasties. As stated, there are only a few inscriptions which record King's intervention in the local affairs of *nadu*.

And finally *nadu* was an important unit of the state. To early scholars, *ur* was a basic unit political structure of the state and there was a systematic hierarchical arrangements among *ur*, *nadu*, *valanadu*, *kottam* and *mandalam*. The relation between *ur* and *nadu* on one side and between *nadu* and *valanadu*, on the other is still a subject of debate. *Ur*, *uravar*, *urali*, etc., are equally inscribed along with other assemblies at *nadu* level. However, *ur* seems to have acted on the direction of *nadu*. As we have seen, *nadu*, the *nattar*, had the right to transfer the entire village to temple or to any individual. In such case, the assembly of *urat* village level loses its administrative power, if any. And similarly, it is difficult to say that every village had assembly of *ur*. Therefore, the *urar* and *uralikal* in the inscriptions were most probably part of the *nadu* and represented the *nattar* at some villages. Like *nattar*, the *urar* and *uralikal* were also wealthy landlords and they might have had ethnic relation with *nattar*.

The internal relation between *nadu*, *nagaram* and *sabha* is another aspect that needs to be discussed. While *nadu* seems to be an autochthonous development, *nagaram* was created to serve the marketing needs of the *nadu*. *Nagaram*, says Hall, served as a market centre to the *nadu*.³¹ At the beginning, probably before the political intervention of the Cholas, the *nagaram* remained as an integral part of the *nadu* system. And it emerged as a 'natural marketing centre' from the existing agrarian order, within the peasant-dominated *nadu*. Though both the institutions had some sort of symbiotic relationship, the *nagaram* (organization of traders as well traders' settlement) remained subordinated to the *nadu* peasants. Among the inscriptions listed above in four

³¹ Kennath Hall, *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of Colas*, op.cit., p.187.

instances, there is a reference to the coordinate decision taken by *nadu*, *sabha* and *nagaram*. These assemblies fixed the tax to be paid by people who resided in Temple Tirumadivalakam, directed a village people to pay certain taxes to temple, donated land to temple and accepted the land right of a person who was donated a tract of land by the king. Apart from this, the *nattar* alone have been mentioned in seven places and *nagarattar* alone in two places. Therefore, these assemblies came together on certain subjects that were common concern for all three of them. Otherwise, they acted independently. Since *nagaram*'s main concentration was on urban and temple centres, their activity might have been confined within this area, not covering entire *nadu*. Rather, being supreme agency of entire *nadu* and having consisted of all influential landholding communities it would have rested with enormity of power. The term *valanadu* is said to be a creation of state to cover the monopoly of *nadu* at the beginning and *nagaram* during the later period.³² Again to refer Hall, the autochthonous development disturbed by the Cholas through their various initiatives viz., establishment of the *brahmadeyas*, royal patronage to the temple and creating *valanadu* division of administration. The Cholas' most important attempt in this direction is the disintegration of the collaboration between the *nadu* and *nagaram* institutions. It was initially done through 'their treatment of *nagaram* as autonomous revenue collection units', as that of *taniyur brahmadeya*, which had direct revenue link with the state and thus was no longer dependable to the *nattar* assembly, the *nadu*. Having freed from the authority of *nattar*, the landed local elite, *nagaram* became directly responsible to the State. State could collect some additional charges from merchants. Now it turns out to be a struggle between the state and the *nagaram* for power (over *nagaram*) and freedom (from the state). *Nagaram* institution tried to develop its network so as to participate in higher-level commercial transaction. The state had to encourage this not only for its material advantage but it also broke the local autonomy of the *nadu*. *Nagaram*, having local merchants as its members, developed its relationship with itinerant merchant's organization. Attachment with the itinerant traders' organization provided not only wider commercial possibilities and independence from the *nadu* holder, but also it was able to have the service of itinerant merchant's mercenary troops, which is considered that would have been powerful, sometime, then the Cholas' army. It was maintained by the traders in order to safeguard their caravans and to have safety long distance

³² Ibid, p.206.

transaction. Thus *nagaram* was able to become as a supra-*nadu* level of economic organization. At present, the commercial groups developed their political alliance with *valanadu* (supra-nadu level of administrative division) level of state administrators or subordinate rulers to the state. However, the Kennath Hall's perception of supra-nadu level cooperation may not be much relevant to the Kongu region, since the intervention of the state in the region is certainly minimum.

During the medieval period, places such as Thiruchenkodu, Avinasi, Salem, Coimbatore, Attthur, etc., emerged into popular temple centre and thus became a meeting place of traders of different places. There were also sudden settlements of various craftsmen around these cities. They began to engage in divergent occupation such as carpentering, weaving, melting, etc. Accordingly, the artisans were able to come out from the hold of peasants, the *nattars*, and began to be attached with the traders that would have brought them fulltime work and reasonably good earnings. These religious centres were well connected with each other and even the centre of other region like *chola mandalam* and *pandiya mandalam*. References with regard to early trade routes are also numerous. The road named *kongupuravali* is mentioned in a record of the Chola king. *Viranarayanaperuvali*, *kongautavallivali*, *nattupperuvali*, etc., are some other routes, which have inscriptional references. The growing competition in trade and involvement of various trading groups needed to regulate the trading activities, therefore they had to form association. As discussed, the *nagaram* as an urban centre and association of traders had vital role to play in the local administration and decision-making. The relation between *nagarattar* and the *nattar* examined in the previous section shows the mutual cooperation of these institutions. Presumably at the beginning, the *nagarattar* could have been part of the land holding section and later could have taken fulltime mercantile profession. In several places, *nagarattar* are described as landholders. In one such case they have donated entire village to the temple. The names of merchants are seen with long honorific titles like those of kings, *nattars*, and locally influential persons. Like *nattar*, the *nagarattar* were also people of the land and they were not itinerary traders. They could have controlled and organized flow of the merchandises to the *nagaram*. How the *nagarattar* were able to become part of the ruling class? Before discuss this question, let us look at some inscriptional references.

1. Merchants of different Mandalams came together to form Veerapattinam for merchants of Rasipuram (Chart-3, No.456).
2. Pillankaliyan Karpooa Chetty Karpooranarayanan perumal of Sinkalanthapuram donated pillars (Chart-3, No.71).
3. Reference to Poondiudaya Uthama Devan's, a merchant of Mummudi Cholapuram, donation (Chart-3, No.335).
4. Merchants of Vadaparisnadu agreed to pay Paddy and oil to temple (Chart-3, No. 396).
5. Vanikaimadikaiyar agreed to pay one Uzhakku Oil per sekku to temple (Chart-3, No.58).
6. Saliya Nagarattar, Vanikaimadikaiyar and *kaikolar* donated a village to temple (Chart-3, No.249).
7. Sammpu Kilavan Attiur Alvan, a merchant of Chola Mandalam, donated a *pon* to temple (Chart-3, No.363).
8. Sadaiyan Nampiy Seraman Thozhan, a merchant of Karayan Adiyankeththalam donated money to temple (Chart-3, No.459).
9. Iya Pozhil Viyapari Puliyan Pukalidevan donated money to temple (Chart-3, No.90).

Though the *nagarattar* were originally from the peasant community of the *nadu* and had ethnic relation with the *nattar*, there were apparently growing competition between them. The connection with various trading groups of other regions and the sudden boom in mercantile activities throughout the South Asia, the influence and power of the *nagarattar* inevitably increased and thus they were able to act independently without having much dependence upon the *nattar*. Like *nattar*, they began to construct temple, conduct temple festivals, donate generously to temple and brhamanas, bore the titles of ruling classes (such as *devan*, *cholan*, etc.), owned larger tract of lands, and had right to claim a share in the production. Therefore, the overwhelming wealth of traders not only brought them high respect in society, they also began to involve in local affairs. They made large-scale endowments often in money and gold to the temple, as a usual way for status making and winning over the support of local people. As chief promoters, they could have a role in temple administration along with the brahmanas, the priests and the *nattar*, the wealthy landed peasant. The temple centre also acted as administrative headquarters for the state, particularly where the political power of the state could be exercised. Again, the proposition of Kennath Hall can be recalled here. That is, in order to dismantle the monopoly of the *nattar*, the state began to encourage the activities of traders. However, during the course of time, the traders and their various organizations posed threat to the state itself.

The surplus in locally accumulated goods and demand for locally non-available goods required the middleman, the traders, to have contact with the local traders of other temple centres or trading points and sometime with overseas traders. Thus there emerged a specialized group within the traders to look after the inter-regional commodity transaction. The prime role of these itinerary traders is not to market their goods directly to the consumers, whereas transferring the bulk goods to the local traders, the *nagarattar* in particular, and collecting the local products from them. Various traders' confederations operating from far off regions extended their activities to Kongu. Inscriptions throw lights on certain constituted bodies of itinerary traders *manigramam*, *tisai ayirattu inurruvar*, the *ayyavole*, etc.

The appearance of brahminical intuitions, such as *brahmadeya*, *sabha*, *taniur*, *saturvedi mangalam*, etc., in the Kongu inscriptions is comparatively less. Table 5 gives names of *brahmadeya* and *saturvedimangalam* and their topographical location. In total, there are thirty seven references to *brahmadeya* and *saturvedimangalam*. The brahminical assembly, *sabha*, appears in twenty-nine times. Generally, the existence of the brahminical settlement, the *brahmadeya*, is perceived as signifier of the new agrarian settlement. More than integrating the rural society with the state, it is said to have 'turned the subsistence oriented agricultural tracts into surplus oriented agrarian unit'.³³ While Burton Stein perceived the brahmins' relation with the local landholding elite in terms of 'brahman and peasant alliances',³⁴ others emphasized upon the independent nature in the functioning of *brahmadeya*. In the opinion of R.Champakalakshmi, 'it owed its existence and loyalty to the kings who created and patronized it and not to the *nadu*'. To her they 'were harbingers of advanced farming methods—irrigation, management of resources and means of production'.³⁵ Emphasizing that they were royal creation, it is said 'there is no evidence of a dominant peasantry creating or founding *brahmadeyas* or of a voluntary and mutually beneficial brahman-dominant *vellala* alliance as implied in the theory of the peasant state'. Though there is no disagreement in observing that the brahminical institutions were encouraged in order to facilitate the peaceful legitimization of the state power, certain other aspects need to be studied against the empirical data.

³³ R. Champakalakshmi, 'State and Economy: South India Circa A.D.400-1300' in Romila Thapar (ed.), *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History*, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1995, p.279.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 280.

³⁵ Ibid, p.279.

Table 5: References to Brahmadeya and Saturvedimangalam

No	Name	Location	Message	Reference
1	Selanattu paruthipalli Rajasimma Saturvedimangalam	Thiruchenkodu	Land was donated to temple	147
2	Selanattu Paruthipalli Rajasimma Saturvedimangalam	Thiruchenkodu	Building material donated to temple	148, 149
3	Muppa Samutra Saturvedimangalam	Thiruchenkodu	Devadan land was donated	160
4	Poovaniyanattu Arukavur Muppa Samutra Saturvedimangalam	Thiruchenkodu	<i>Nattar</i> donated devadana iraili land	161
5	Poovaniyanattu Arukavur Muppa Samutra Saturvedimangalam	Thiruchenkodu	Donation in money	162
6	Periyanattu ponprappiyan Veerapandiya Saturvedimangalam	Rasipuram	-	172
7	Varaiyanattu Brahmadeyam Ulakalantha Saturvedimangalam	Rasipuram	-	174
8	Arrur Kurrathu Brahmadeyam	Atthur	King donated land	183
9	Kozhnjipadi Saturvedimangalam	Avinasi	Land donation by a local individual	195
10	Veerachola Valanadu Vaiyirampalli Uthama Chola Saturvedimangalam	Avinasi	A donation from a brahmana	198
11	Vikramacholavalanadu Manampadi Madhurandhaka Saturvedimangalam	Avinasi	<i>Sabha</i> donated tax due in kind	235
12	Perur Nattu Pukalidam Kodutha Chola Saturvedimangalam	Coimbatore	Kings order to <i>Sabha</i> and ur about water distribution	378
13	Sivapathasekara Saturvedimangalam	Coimbatore	<i>Sabha</i> and <i>Ur</i> donated land	380
14	Veerakeralanattu Veerakazhal Azhakiya Saturvedimangalam (established by a Pallavaraiyar on his parent's memory)	Coimbatore	Brahman's donation	416
15	Veerakeralanattu Veerakazhal Azhakiya Saturvedimangalam	Coimbatore	<i>Urar</i> donated land	417
17	Veeranarayan Saturvedimangalam	Pollachi	<i>Nattar</i> donated land	232
18	Karaivazhinattu Brahmadeyam Jeyankonda Chola Saturvedimangalam	Atthur	<i>Sabha</i> donated land	209
19	Lakshmana Saturvedimangalam (esatablished by mudali Nalludayappan)	Omalur	Nattaver sold their land to brhamans	379
20	Lakshmana Saturvedimangalam (established by Mudali Nalludayappan)	Omalur	<i>Nattar</i> of Poovaniya nadu donated land	301
21	Sivapatha Sekara Saturvedimangalam	Perur	<i>Sabha</i> donated land	383

Among the *brahmadeya* establishments, two had been formed during the 11th century. The inscription that records this arrangement in Atthur has been dated with the regnal year of the Chola ruler. The third one in Rasipuram had come up during the 13th century under the influence of Kongu regional rulers. The *saturvedimangalam*, found invariably in all parts of Kongu, owe their existence to both kings and local holding elites. While several *saturvedimangalam* have been established by kings and consequently named after them, in few instances local rulers have donated land and facilitated their formation. For example, in the memory of their parents, Nalludaiyappa

Mudahali in Tharamangalam and Pallavaraiyan in Coimbatore are said to have created the *Lakshmana saturvedimangalam* and *veerakazhal azhakiya saturvedimangalam* respectively. All these Brahman settlements are found in relatively fertile regions closer to water reservoirs. It seems, in some cases, there were collaborations between *nattar* and residents of *saturvedimangalam*. We are informed that the *nattar* sold their land to *pattars* (brahman) of *lakshmana saturvedimangalam* created by Nalludaiyappa *mudali* (Chart-3, No.379). The same *nattavar* has donated a village to a temple located in *muppa samutra saturvedimangalm* (Chart-3, No.161). The same temple had also received a village from Vanji *nattavar*. An inscription registers *saturvedimangalathu nattar's* (*nattar* of *saturvedimangalam*) donation to the temple of the *saturvedimangalam* (Chart-3, No.423). We are not sure how the donated lands to the temple were redistributed to the brahmins, but presumably most of these fertile tracts would have been under the hold of brahmins, as the major functionaries to the temple. Several inscriptions provide details about the private ownership of land *nampi* and *pattar* of *saturvedimangalam*. Not only from the *nattar*, generally the *saturvedimangalam* temples had received land grants from various fronts including kings, *urar*, individuals and even brahmins of same *saturvedimangalam*. For example, a brahman, who belonged to *cholamandalathu thaniur veeranarayana saturvedimangalam*, donated land to temple (Chart-3, No.199). With the collaboration with the *urar*, *saturvedimangalathu sabhayar* of Perur Nadu granted some tracts of land to temple. An individual had purchased land from *sabha* and then donated the same to temple (Chart-3, No.81). The lands donated to the *saturvedimangala pattars* and temple naturally became centre of high agrarian production since they were located in fertile zones. The land given to *lakshmana saturvedimangalathu pattar* by Veerachola Poovaniya *nattar* is said to have watered from *seyyap perumal yeri* (Chart-3, No.87). In another instance, the granted lands to the aforesaid *pattar* had access to *seyaperumal eri*, *kamintan eri*, *kunjamaluinayanar devadana eri*, *kannanthai eri*, *thanna nayakkan eri*, *kizha poikarai*, *semapalla eri*, etc (Chart-3, No. 111). All provide enough indications that there were already well-developed agrarian settlements over these regions. Similarly the brahman institutions like *sabha* have functioned together with peasants assembly such as *nadu* and *urand* sometime with *nagaram* for certain public affairs. References in this regard have already been mentioned. *Devadana* was another category of land granted to temple, possibly they would have come under the possession of brahmins. All categories of donor, have granted *devadana* land. However, if the whole village were

donated, the donor would be either kings or powerful *nattars*. Thalaivai, Atthur, Rasappadi, Araisor of Vadaparanadu, Perur, Palakaipuzhai (Veerarajendranallur) in Arukavur Nadu, etc., are certain *devadana* villages that appear in these inscriptions.

Table 6: References to the titles and the status

No	Full Name	Titles	Status	Place	Ref
1	Nakka Cholanka Devar Mudalikilil Nangan Maranana Cholakon	Mudali, Maran	Military chief	Rasipuram	4
2	Malaiyanurudaiyan Cempaiyalvan	Alvan	Chief	Atthur	5
3	Vanakovaraiyar	Araiyar	Chief/officer	Atthur	23
4	Azhakiya Cholanana Yethirili Cholach Sampuvarayan	Rayar	Chief	Atthur	8
5	Arasan Thondaiman	Arasan	Chief	Atthur	11
6	Athitan Ganapathi Alvanana Kaduvetti	Alvan	Chief	Atthur	14,30
7	Kandiya Devar	Devar	Chief	Atthur	18,19
8	Sethi Rayar	Rayar	Chief	Atthur	
9	Thillai Nayaka Nampi Sattanudaiyan	Udaiyan	member of sabha	Atthur	24
10	Kumaran Thakkaur Devar	Devar	Chief	Atthur	26
11	Parathayan Narayanan Umasakithanana Thiruvengkadathu Nambi	-	Chief	Atthur	40
12	Pullai Vettuvan Kuthadun Devan Irunkolan Valankai Mekaman	Devan	Chief	Atthur	41
13	Azhakiya Seyanana Cholanka Devan	Devan	Chief	Namakkal	52
14	Prathikandathara Cholan	Cholan	Officer	Namakkal	56
15	Kanalai Thathiyar Animoori Nadalvar Deviyar	Nadalavan	Chief	Namakkal	59
16	Veerrirundan Semandaran Akalanka Nadalvan		Chief	Namakkal	66
17	Sinkalanth Thakapuramudaiyan Natturan Sivalichetty	Uran, Chetty	Trader	Namakkal	72
18	Ponnerivarman		Chief	Namakkal	68
19	Arapalliudaiyan Veeranachetty	Udaiyan Chetty	Trader	Namakkal	69
20	Karpura Chetty	Chetty	Trader	Namakkal	71
21	Selanattu Cerakap Padiyana Manikkan Cholanka Devan	Devan	Chief	Salem	73
22	Viyapari Sathap Pakaiyan	Viyapari	Chief	Salem	77
23	Manikramathu Viyapari Manjan Maniyamarthandan	Marthadan	Merchant	Salem	78
24	Prathi Kandan	Kandan	Chief	Salem	55
25	Kamalaril Annamalai Thattan Suriyanana Nurrenmath Thattan	Thattan	Artisan	Salem	82
26	Vellappa Nattu Candira Kon	Kon	Chief	Salem	84
27	Rajasraya Saturvedi Mangalathu Kasipan		Chief	Salem	88
28	Saturvedimangalathu Velan Valli	Velan	Chief	Salem	89
29	Mudalikilil Kannakanana Vazhuthinarayana Devan	Devan	Chief	Salem	90
30	Valli Maruthamudaiyan Azhakar	Udaiyan	Chief	Salem	91
31	Kulothunka Chola Vanakovaraiyan Yethirili Chola Velalar	Araiyar	Chief	Atthur	99

32	Cirupuli Velalar Chozhiyatharaiyar	Araiyar	Chief	Atthur	101
33	Ulakalantha Chola Nallur Adhitan Ganpathi Alvan Vantharaya	Alvan	Officer	Atthur	104
34	Maruthamudaiyan Sathan Manenthiya Kaiyan	Udaiyan	Officer	Atthur	105, 106
35	Tharamankalthu Mudalikalil Neruni Ilaiyan Nalludaiyappan	Udaiyan	Chief	Omalur	107
36	Niruni Ilaiyan Nalludaiyappan Mudali	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	108
37	Tharamangalathu Mudalikalil Suriya Dever Periya Mudali	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	109
38	Amara Kunriyil Mudalikalil Kadantharkka Mudaliyar	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	110
39	Semmanikudal Mudalikalil Alapiranthar Mudaliyar	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	110
40	Kanapathinallur Mudalikalil Pillaiyappan	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	110
41	Settamankkurichi Mudalikalil Ilandai Chokkan Muppan	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	110
42	Samutharathil Mudalikalil Kudiyan Namman Mudali	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	110
43	Maramankalathil Mudalikalil Svadan Seyyan Kunra Kamintan	Mudali	Chief	Omalur	110
44	Malaimandalathu Malaiyalaril Thavaikurichi Sattan Thirayan	Thiryan	Merchant	Salem	95
45	Ponnakutan Mutharaian Cellan	Muthariyan	Chief	Salem	97
46	Poomanayan Cenkazhaniyar Thirukkai Velir Kaliyappar Perumal Thirumalyappan Perumal Koundar	Koundar		Salem	98
47	Vellalaril Nallaudaiyappan Ullutta Mudalikal	Mudalikal	Chief	Omalur	114
48	Puliyar Kadampanana Pamancavan Vellur Kizhavan	Kizhavan	Head	Thiruchenkodu	116
49	Pulla Vettuvaryl Nadazhvan Desi Alaprandan Mumudichola Chakaravarti Ana Ankarayan	Nadalvan, mumudi cholan, chakravarthi, rayan	Chief	Namakkal	136
50	Poonduudaiyan Senta Nadazhvan Ilanakarudaiyan Nampanj Narikkanum	Nadazhvan	Chief	Namakkal	143
51	Urali Pandi Vettuvaryl Adiyaman Naduvil Nangan		Chief	Thiruchenkodu	146
52	Karamparkalil Mudali Kanca Masthan	Mudali	Chief	Thiruchenkodu	147
53	Mudalikalil Kanandai Siriyandaiyar Cilampandai		Chief	Thiruchenkodu	147
54	Karamparkalai Mudali	Mudali	Chief	Thiruchenkodu	148
55	Urarkalil Periyapillaiyandai Karumpillaiyen	Urali	-	Thiruchenkodu	140
56	Mudali Kollarkali Kannuvan Appan	Mudali	Chief	Thiruchenkodu	151
57	Periyannattu Velan	Velan	Official	Thiruchenkodu	153
58	Nadudaiya Cholanka Devar	Devan	Nattar	Thiruchenkodu	154
59	Kamintan Ponna Karandan	Kamintan	Chief	Thiruchenkodu	172
60	Urali Cundai Vettuvaryl Cilampan Ciriyan	Urali, Araiyar	Chief	Salem	173

61	Nadalvar Nattu Yezhuran Mumudi Chalapurattu Viyapari.	Nadalvan	Merchant/ chief	Salem	176
62	Cholanka Devanana Yellanthalaiyanar		-	Salem	177
63	Mudalikalil Seyankonda Veeraciyar Kungal Nayan Patto Thiruneerru Pallavarayan.	Mudhal, Pallavarayan	Chief	Salem	171
64	Kathur Mudalikalil Attalai Seva Valarthu Vazhivitha	Mudali	Chief	Avinasi	196
65	Kudur Nayan Srirankanatha Pattan	Pattan	Brahman	Avinasi	203
66	Rajarajavalanattu Perumpulirudaiyan	Udaiyan	Chief	Avinasi	205
67	Pillaikalil Kulothunka Chola Devan Kuravan	Devan	Chief	Avinasi	208
68	Perumal Mudalikalil Vallankilan Mallan Azhakiya Cirrampalamudaiyan	Mudali, udaiyan	Chief	Avinasi	207
69	Thulu Nayakkamaril Athompu Nayakkar Verasuriya Devan	Devan	Chief	Avinasi	227
70	Peruman Thulu Mudalikali Kottiyar Chola Narayana Devan	Mudali	Chief	Avinasi	228
71	Kaikolar Thozhuthikalil Dhanpalan	Kaikolar	Artisan	Avinasi	234
72	Kaniyalaril Vadkopurthalvan Veerrirunthan Pachaivarar Perumal Azhakpillai	Alvan	Chief	Avinasi	244
73	Pukali Chakaravarti Vadukan Pillan Sivaladevan Idangai Nayaka Pattan	Chakravarti	Brahman/ chief	Avinasi	
74	Shiva Brahman Kasiva Kottirattu Alvan Sundaranatha Veerachola Pattan	Alvan	Brahman/ chief	Avinasi	248
75	Vellalan Uthamaril Sathanandan	Vellalan	Chief	Avinasi	251
76	Chola Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/ officer	Avinasi	253
77	Mathur Viyaparikal Chokkan Perumal	Viyapari	Merchant	Avinasi	254
78	Thattan Ciru Kutar Maranana Manruladuvan	Mannraduvan	Chief	Avinasi	258
79	Esanan Selai Chetty Ponnampala Kuttan	Chetty	Chief	Avinasi	262
80	Vellala Paiyaril Naduvan	Vellalan	Chief	Avinasi	287
81	Kovil Athikarm Seyvarkalil Perunkudi Adaiyanana Thiru Neerru Perran Sundhra Vanathak Kuttan Veerachola Gurukulrayan	Rayan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	279
82	Muthaval Kudhiraivevakapadai Valavan Alkondan Apimuthanan Sembiyan Marayan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/ officer	Udumalaipettai	280
83	Perumandiyaril Malaiyala Padaiyil Nattuperra Vzhuvatha Thirunilakanda Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/ officer	Udumalaipettai	282
84	Malaiyalan Karumakodan Kumaran Kandan		Chief	Udumalaipettai	282
85	Kandan Rajarathichan Mudikonda Chola Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/ officer	Udumalaipettai	287
86	Arulalan Perumalan Anjatha Kandap Brahmarayan	Brahmarayan	Officer?	Udumalaipettai	288
87	Vellala Kovan Araiyan Araisukadiyan	Araiyan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	288
88	Sinkadevan	Devan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	291
89	Samantharil Devanthozhan Viladasinka Devan	Devan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	297

90	Manradi Uyyan Thiruvekampamudaiyan	Manradi	Chief	Udumalaipettai	294
91	Manradi Kavn Kavanana Naraiyan Nattu Vellan	Vellan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	295
92	Vellappanattu Palaikattu Seriyil Vellalan Kuruchiyaril Kumaran Kuranan Kumaratha Thananjia Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	296
93	Velathu Pendukalil Cenkanmal Cokkiyen		Chief	Udumalaipettai	297
94	Kodan Raman Azhakiya Manikka Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	298
95	Vellalan Kallan Paraiyan Naraverachola Silai Chetty		Merchant	Udumalaipettai	302
96	Nilaininra Ayiravarku Nayakam Kumaran Sattan Visai Nalansey Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	309
97	Vellalan Kumaran Kumaranan Kumarathannjiya Pallavaraiyan	Vellalan, pallavaraiyan	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	310
98	Manruladuvan Maruthanana Viruvzhanzhikai Pillai	Manraduvan	Chief		311
99	Raman Kumaran Sekara Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	318
100	Saiva Chakravarti Raja Raja Pattan.	Siva chakravarti	Chief		368
101	Veera Chola Anankan Koorran	Veera Chola	Chief	Udumalaipettai	323
102	Manradikalil Kovannan Naraiya Kanattu Vellalan	Manradi	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	324
103	Manradi Vanji Velalan	Manradi	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	325
104	Manradikalil Kavan Chokkan	Manradi	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	312
105	Manradikalil Uyyasan Thiruvezhmudaiyan	Udaiyan, Manradi	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	327
106	Devaradiyaril Chokkan Vembiyen		Chief	Udumalaipettai	328
107	Vellalan Kalikesi	Vellalan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	329
108	Malaiyalan Karuppukodan Kumaran Kandan		Chief	Udumalaipettai	330
109	Muthaval Nayagam Seyvarkalil Ulakan Devanana Arinjiyan Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief	Udumalaipettai	331
110	Uyyavanthan Maruthanana Rajaraja Pattan Soma Natha Devanana Athi Saiva Chakaravarti	Asichiva Chakaravarti	Chief	Udumalaipettai	333
111	Kaniudaiya Sivabrahmanan Cholan Adhi Saiva Chakaravarti	Asichiva Chakaravarti	Chief	Udumalaipettai	336
112	Kodikaraithozhu Mudalikalil Cholan Kuttanana Veerarajendra Irunkolan Perumal	Mudali	Chief	Udumalaipettai	337
113	Mudalikalil Yazhvallan Pandyanana Veerarajendra Anuthira Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/officer	Udumalaipettai	338
114	Attalai Sevakan Vazhvittanana Veerarajendra Irunkolan	-	Chief	Udumalaipettai	321
115		Araiyan,	Chief/	Udumalaipettai	342

	Thenkudmaril Araiyan Ulakuyya Vanthanana Veerarajendiran Anuthirappallavarian	pallavariyan	officer		
116	Manradikalil Kavan Cholanana Veerachola Irunkolan	Manradi	Chief	Udumalaipettai	345
117	Vellappa Nattu Kumaran Kumaran	-	-	Udumalaipettai	346
118	Vellalan Malaiyaril Tholan pillan	Vellalan	-	Coimbatore	357
119	Kalaian Araiyan Veerachola Vazhuthi Nadudaiyen	Nadudaiyan	Chief	Coimbatore	352
120	Cholamandalthu Keralanthaka Valanattu Karuppur Vellalan Kavanurudaiyan Manikkavasakan	Urudaiyan	Chief	Coimbatore	353
121	Samantharil Kannavarana Visaiyathitha Devan	Devan	Chief	Coimbatore	356
122	Vellalan Payiriyaril Veerachola Gangan	Vellalan, Veerachola	Chief	Coimbatore	357
123	Vellalan Pullikalil paraiyan paraiyanana nattuk Kamundan	Vellalan, Kamundan	Chief	Coimbatore	358
124	Yethirili Chola Ankara Senapathi Sundara Pandiya Marayan	Senapathi, rayan	Chief	Coimbatore	361
125	Thondai Mandlathu Viyapari Sampkilavan attiuralvan Shivabrahmanan Rajarajapattan,	Viyapari, Uralvan	Trader	Coimbatore	368
126	Kozhumathil Sundranana Anuththira Pallavaraiyan Ganapathi	Pallavariyan	Chief	Coimbatore	364
127	Manradi Thiruvengkadaudaiyanana Veeragankan	Udaiyan, Manradi	Chief	Coimbatore	365
128	Ponnampala Kutan Uyyankonda Pillai	-	-	Coimbatore	366
129	Iraniya Mutta Nattu Cirupalai Urudaiyan Peryan Chokkan	Udaiyan	Chief	Coimbatore	367
130	Vellalan Vichakarkalil Patti Kovanana Mandala Mudali Aludaiyar	Mudali	Chief	Coimbatore	370
131	Pattina Nattu Pazham Pattanathu Ivuradaiyan Arikesavan Seyyanan Cholan Sakaya	Udaiyan	Chief/ officer	Coimbatore	371
132	Manrattu Velankalil Urbrahmanar Kavusiya Kotrittu Devan Chettyana Brahmarayan Madukarai Ur Brahmanar Arya Kottirattu Padi	Manrattu, Brahmarayan	Chief/ officer	Coimbatore	373
133	Arasan Sembi Araiyan Kamindan	Araiyan	Chief	Coimbatore	376
134	Urali Kalinkarayan	Rayan	Chief	Coimbatore	376
135	Irali Amanthiya Rayan, Manradi Nachinaman	Rayan, manradi	Chief	Coimbatore	376
136	Rajendra Chola Brahmarayan	Brahmarayan	Officer	Coimbatore	376
137	Korramangala Manjipulithavthu Viyaparikal Kodhai Kumaran	Viyapari	Merchant	Coimbatore	379
138	Manradi Sadaian Nakknun Palan	Manradi	Chief	Coimbatore	381
139	Manradi Devan Kandan Thondaiman	Manradi, devan	Chief	Coimbatore	382
140	Brahman Citramezhi Pattan	Citramezhi	Chief	Coimbatore	390
141	Idikarailirukkum Vellalan Malaiyaril	Vellalan,	Chief	Coimbatore	394

	Kamindan Manradiyan	Manradiyan			
142	Sevur Viyaparikalil Nayan Mathan Citramezhi Pattan	Citramezhi	Chief	Coimbatore	
143	Vellalan Korranthaikalil Mudali Veeran Citramezhi Pattan	Vellalan, Citramezhi	Chief	Coimbatore	397
144	Kallamadilirukkum Vetkovaril Murkan Kurudanana Nadaikonda Nattu Chetty	Chetty	Trader	Coimbatore	399
145	Vellalan Madaikalil Araiyan Kavan	Vellalan, Mudali	Chief/officer	Coimbatore	406
146	Vellalan Malaiyaril Kesan Tamilvelan	Vellalan, Velan	Trader	Coimbatore	401
147	Vellalan Korranthaikalil Anni Kavan Manaikizhathi	Vellalan	Trader	Coimbatore	403
148	Puluvan Muttaikalil Adayan Pothan Ana Uthama Pandiya Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Trader	Coimbatore	405
149	Vellalan Pullikalil Kovan Irudanana Rajanarayanan Kamundan	Vellalan, Kamundan	Trader	Coimbatore	406
150	Kaikolai Periyandan Pillai Sathyaparanan.	-	-	Coimbatore	408
151	Puluvan Mailaril Velalan Velala Periya Pillai	Velalan	Chief	Coimbatore	409
152	Vellalan Vattamaniyanan Athiraja Vanji Velan	Velan	Chief	Coimbatore	408
153	Vellalaril Poonthaikalil Maniyamaraian Raja Vallavariyan	Vallavariyan	Chief	Coimbatore	408
154	Idaiyaril Mathan Manjanana Manuthinka Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief	Coimbatore	415
155	Kozhumathil Samakatti Senathipathikalil Adithan Mudaliyana Chola Pallavaraiyan	Pallavaraiyan	Chief/officer	Coimbatore	420
156	Chola Muventa Velan	Muventa Velan	Officer	Coimbatore	
157	Veera Pandiya Muventa Velan Pallavaraiyan	Muventa Velan, Pallavaraiyan	Officer	Coimbatore	
158	Vijaya Singa Devan	Devan	Chief	Coimbatore	418
159	Pandiy Muventa Velan	Velan	Chief	Palladam	429
160	Kaniudaiya Shivabrahmanar Kasuvakothirathil Periyar Mudali Narpathennayiravan Citrameli Pattan	Mudali	Chief	Mettuppalayam	440
161	Vellalan Karunthozhikalil Andan Kannanana Karuyan	Vellalan	Chief	Mettuppalayam	440
162	Kaniudaiya Shivabrahmanar Kasuvakothirathil Periyar Mudali Narpathennayiravan Citrameli Pattan	Mudali, Citramezhi	Chief	Mettuppalayam	440
163	Udaiyan Uthama Nampiyan Thiruvothapura Mazhakiyan	Udaiyan	Chief	Mettuppalayam	440
164	Udaiyan Thennana Idangai Nayakapattan	Udaiyan	Chief	Mettuppalayam	442
165	Vetkovaril Seyapalan Vaiyiradevarana Vazhithunai Perumal		Chief	Mettuppalayam	444
166	Vellalaril Semparil Sellanan Konkazhvar	Vellalan, alvan	Chief	Mettuppalayam	445
167	Vellalan Seyyaril Paraiyan Thennakon	Vellalan	Chief	Mettuppalayam	446

168	Vellankalil Manjanana Kaliyan Kaliyanana Sambanthan	Vellalan	Chief	Mettuppalayam	452
169	Vellalan Sempothikalil Cirukali Cirpillaiyan Sannatha Narainthan	Vellalan	Chief	Mettuppalayam	454
170	Sempothikalil Sadiyar Kannan	-	Chief	Thiruppur	456
171	Konattilirunthu Vazhum Atkovan Kanguppai Muthaachar	-	Chief	Thiruppur	458
172	Vanikan Sadaiyan Nampiyana Seraman Thozhan Yenpan Perumpzhanathu Uthamacholiyar	-	Chief	Thiruppur	451
173	Vellalan Devanthai Ciriyan Ceyankonda Chola Kamintan	Vellalan, Devan, Kamintan	Chief	Thiruppur	460
174	Vellalan Devanthaikalil Ciriyan Pillan	Vellalan	Chief	Thiruppur	467
175	Perumplanthil Kumpituirukkum Andarkalil Devanthai Mukkanana Cerman Thozhan	Devan	Chief	Thiruppur	462
176	Vellalan Mularil Avinasi Mudaliyan Chola Narayana Kamintan	Vellalan, Kaminda n	Chief	Thiruppur	467
177	Thirukandiur Vilakatharian Ampalavana Ponnampala Kuthan	Athiariya n	Chief	Thiruppur	466
178	Brahman Kriyapillaiana Virarajendiran brahmarayan	Brahmara yan	Officer	Thiruppur	468
179	Kadaiur Viyapari Mudali Cirupillai	Mudali, Viyapari	Trader	Thiruppur	462
180	Kandiur Vilakatharaiyan Ampalvan Ponnar Meniyan Ponnampala Kuthan	Araiyan	Chief	Thiruppur	469
181	Kondalattu Salikaril Modi Cirupollan	-	-	Thiruppur	470
182	Cholamandalattu Kandiur Vilakkatharaiyan Ampalavanan Ponnar Meniyan	-	-	Thiruppur	470

These personal names listed in the inscription help us to deduce the operation of power-holders at local level. More than just registering the land transaction or donation to the temple, there was another purpose behind inscribing the personal names with long honorific titles. This was a means to publicize the status and power of the donor. The influential person bearing honorific titles could have played multi-tasks at local level. A landlord can also be a rich merchant, state representative, member of *nadu* assembly and part of temple administration. Therefore, among the title-holders listed above, a good number could have been part of either of the elitist institutions, such as *nadu*, *nagaram*, *sabha* at *nadu* level and *urat* village level. These institutions or assemblies acting almost like a state at local level were primarily to protect the interest of the privileged section and to facilitate the ideological legitimization of the state.

Most of the titles could have been used as prudential labels for the social groups in order to show higher status in social hierarchy. The titles *vellalan*, *puluva*, *chetty*, *vanikar*, *viyapari* and *chakaravarti* can be excluded from the discussion since they were community or occupational names rather than emblems of political power or corporate authority. The contextual meaning of a title may vary from place to place, but they signify the analogous status and power. For example, the use of personal names and titles of Chola rulers by a chief in far off places would mean his political power in his locality. Likewise, the title *chakaravarti* can be used by a merchant and a brahman to symbolize the economic and the ritual power respectively (Chart-3, Nos. 321 and 363). Individual can possess several titles. If both *chetty* and *mudali* appear in a personal name, then they indicate the economic and the political status of a person. In case of *vellalan* and *mudali*, they are to state the community name and economic status. Generally, all the titles express the underlying interplay of the political, economic and social power of a person.

The titles such as *udaiyan*, *mudali* and *koundan*, which became caste category during the medieval times, have frequent appearances irrespective of regions. Often proceeding with village names, *udaiyan* indicates the possession of land in the particular village. As Karashima has rightly perceived, name of holy places prefix the title in the absence of village names.³⁶ Both non-brahmans and brahmans have used *udaiyan* in their personal names. *Mudali* has been used at least in two contexts. It denotes a military authority in the personal name *tharamangalathu mudalikalil suriya dever periya mudali* (Chart-3, No.109), a brahman in *kaniudaiya shivabrahmanar kasuvakothirathil periyar mudali narpathonpathayiram citrameli pattan* (Chart-3, No. 440) and a *vellala* chief in *vellalan vicharkalil patti kovanana mandala mudali aludaiyar* (Chart-3, No. 442). Some *mudali* titleholders possessed enormous political power. For example the *mudalikal* of Tharamankalam were local independent chiefs and wealthy landlords. One of them is referred to have established *saturvedimangalam* in the memory of his father, while several other *mudali* donated large tract of lands to the brahmans settled there. *Koundan* is mentioned sometimes as *kamintan* or *kamundan*. Initially, it could have been used by the village headmen, who were assigned the charge of guarding the village. It became a dominant caste name in Kongu during the later period.

³⁶ Noburo Karashima, *History and Society in South India: The Cholas to Vijayanagar*, op.cit., p.57.

Alvan, nadalvan, araiyan, pallavaraiyan, brahmarayan, muventavelan, viluparayan, rayan, senathipati and *manradi* are another category of titles that are basically the political or bureaucratic position of the holders. Of these except *manradi*, all others are common to entire south India during the early medieval times. *Manradi*, which came into use at the end of the 13th century, became popular power denoting title during the medieval period. *Manradi* would have been officers of state, particularly in the rule of Kongu Cholas. *Manradi* looked after the land, called *mannarai*, which were under the direct control of the states. Soon they became chief of these regions employed the power of military and revenue collection. *Senapathi* were probably military chiefs of the state. Similarly, *rayan, pallavarayan, brahmarayan* and *araiyan* were primarily local chiefs who sometime became part of state machinery, in most cases while acted as independent local rulers. Reference to a *vanakovaraiyan* in Atthur has been already mentioned. Here in some inscriptions, the *Vanakovaraiyan* was signatory, who seems to be executing the order of the king. But in same place, within a short period he has developed an independent status. Now, the later inscriptions have been dated with regnal years of Vanakovaraiyan. Similarly, several other rayar titleholders have represented as signatories as well as local chiefs. *Ariyan* and *pallavaraiyan* were in use right from the beginning of the 6th century. Several herostones mentioned in the previous chapters refer to these titles. It seems that these titleholders were basically local military chiefs and they maintained their power right from the beginning of their pastoral stage. They would have accepted the political authority of state rulers in course of time. According to Karashima, the '*muventavelan* is the title given to the officers of *vellala* caste and *brahmarayan* is to brahman officers'.³⁷ In the Kongu inscriptions *muventavelan* appear in both the Chola as well as the Pandya inscriptions. They have been called as *pandiya muventavelan* and *chola muventavelan* in the respective cases (Chart-3, Nos. 40, 429 etc). Rather than other titleholders, the *muventavelan* seems to have had important position in the state administration, particularly in revenue department (Chart-3, No.121).

5. Characterizing the State: Theoretical Models and Applicability

The present study at peripheral regions or region of relative isolation was basically undertaken to depict a multilinear development and therefore to suggest that

³⁷ Noburo Karashima, *History and Society in South India: The Cholas to Vijayanagar*, op.cit., p. 58.

the theoretical models on the process of state formation or the state structure obtained from the studies based on the Kaveri region may not be applicable to the peripheral regions. Therefore, it becomes necessary to study as to what extent the process of state formation and structure of state in Kongu contradicts with the previous studies.

The model of Asiatic Mode of Production is still found useful by some scholars to study the nature of the Indian state, and south Indian state in particular.³⁸ Such constructions portray the Chola state in south India in terms of 'archaic' with the characters of absence of private property, prevalence of slavery on a large scale irrigation work managed by the state and thereby despotic rule and so on. Further, it has been pointed out that there was no visible social change at the local level. One interesting aspect in the entire course of discussion in this study is that, we have seen how certain people were able to gain economic and political strength and power and become part of ruling class. The tribal chiefs, rich cattle breeders, the heroes who exhibited bravery at different juncture, traders, big landholders, artisans, etc achieved higher position in society and enjoyed more power and privileges in different points of history. We have also discussed the evolution of title-holders from the local kin groups in different junctures of history. For instance, the *ko*, *vel* and *perumagan* during the classical period, *araisar*, *athiaraisar*, *gagathiaraisar*, *ilavaraisar*, *paruman*, *varman*, *pallavariyar*, etc from the herostones, *rayan*, *ariayan*, *pallavaraiyan*, *brahmarayan*, *koundan*, *kamintan*, *muventavelan*, *alvan*, *periyannattu muventa velan*, *velan*, *manradi*, etc—all signify the continued social tension and mobility from below.

In response to the notion of absence of private property in south India, scholars have brought out empirical evidences to show the prevalence of private property during the Chola times. The table-3 of the chapter reflects upon the nature of land transactions. With this, we were able to show that the private right over agricultural tracts was gradually expanding in medieval Kongu. The land was circulated among the landlords, chiefs, temples and the state functionaries. And now and then, it reached out to the hands of other groups like, *kaikolar*, *devaradiyar*, medical practitioners, gardeners, etc. The forest and dry lands were given to individuals. But, still various aspects of non-brahman villages have not yet been effectively studied. Ownership over several villages by a landlord would mean his right to collect a share of production from

³⁸ For example, Kathleen Gough describes a similar nature of South Indian society and polity to the theory of Asiatic mode of production in 'Modes of Production in south India, *Economic and Political Weekly*, February, 1980.

the cultivators. Viewed from the perspective of the cultivators, they might appear as the owners of the land in which they were engaged in tilling. They could increase their landed property by clearing forest and bringing virgin land under cultivation, but for this they had to pay the due share to the landlords or landholders. Therefore, even in the non-brahman villages, every family or extended family could be considered as a production unit, which exercised authority to cultivate a particular tract of land. In several places where agriculture was not evolved into a dominant subsistence production, cattle could have indicated the private economic status of individuals.

Moreover, it has been argued that the political process needs to be studied with the correspondening changes in the socio-economic sphere. In this context, the internal socio-economic development in the Kongu regions is not commensurate with the political process in the Kaveri regions. For instance, when in the Kaveri region, the economic and social changes facilitated the emergence of relatively a larger political unification during the Pallava and the Chola period, the social formation in Kongu was yet to come out from its pre-state stage. It was only during the 13th century that there was significant development in the agrarian production, which facilitated a political unification within the Kongu region. Further, the nature of political formation shows its peculiar characters that the region never became a full-fledged part of any dynastic rule of south India. Being a peripheral region to all the major south Indian dynasties, it was ruled by numerous self-governing chieftains. The discussion on the relation between the Kongu rulers and the ruler of other south Indian dynasties indicates that the Kongu rulers conventionally accepted the titles of these dynastic rulers and in the early days they dated their inscriptions with the regnal years of the main ruling family. But we have argued that this adaptation of high-sounding titles and royal names of Cholas did not signify their subordination to the Cholas, but their supreme authority within their regions. Therefore, we figure out that there is no indication regarding the full-fledged sovereignty of the outside dynastic ruler over the region. On the other hand, during the Cholas period, the Kongu rulers became more independent eventhough they bore titles and the personal names of the Cholas.

Nilakanta Sastri's projection of the Chola State, as a powerful, bureaucratic and centralized state has already been questioned. Glorifying the Chola kingship as a Byzantine monarchy, the rulers were portrayed as executives over a vast and powerful

bureaucracy and military organization.³⁹ The state functioned with the different layers of administrative and territorial divisions such as *mandalam*, *kottam*, *nadu* and *grama*. Royal officials represented each division. The independent nature of local assemblies was presumed as local self-government initiated by the state. Therefore, in the view of Sastri, the Kongu country seems to be a territorial division of centralized state of the Chola. In such cases, the Kongu rulers are to be considered as royal functionaries of the Chola kings. The problem in these early writings seems to be their ignorance of the political process in the peripheral areas. The village settlement and the sociopolitical mobility of local elite groups were not studied from the perspective of 'from below'.

The South Indian Feudalism model visualizes a pyramidically organized hierarchical structure—the king at the top, with the feudatory chieftains immediately below him, the local groups such as *nadu*, *sabha*, and *nagaram*, again the tenants and cultivators below these groups, and finally the landless labourers at the bottom.⁴⁰ The role of chiefs and their relation with other main ruling dynasties of south India has been studied in terms of lord-vassal relationship of Europe which include the characters of the military obligation of the chiefs to the overlords, their obligation to attend the overlords courts the protection they received from the overlord, the annual tribute they paid to the overlord and so on.⁴¹

In fact, the societal development and the formation of state in south India have not yet been studied in terms of process. Most of the scholarly works in this regard concentrate upon the more sophisticated area of the Chola state in the Kaveri region. Therefore, they were able to analyze the structural nuances of the state rather than the various aspects of the process. Further, the studies do not adequately explain the linkage between the social formation in the classical period and that in the Pallava and Chola period. At this juncture, describing the Chola state in terms of 'feudal' is less convincing. The nature of the relationships between the chiefs of Kongu region and the Cholas is not much different from their relationship with the Pallavas, Pandyas and the *venter* chiefs of the classical period. There had been a continuous fight among these various rulers and sometime the Kongu chiefs joined with one of the major rivalry groups and fought with other. There was always cooperation as well as contention.

³⁹ K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Cholas*, Madras University, Madras, 1935.

⁴⁰ Kesavan Veluthat, *The Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Orient Longman, 1993, p.264

⁴¹ *Ibid*.

Now, the political integration or weakening power of Kongu chiefs was not specific to any historical stage and not because of the necessary development in the socio-economic sphere. From the perspective of Kongu, there seems to be consistent development in political and social sphere. We were able to show in our discussion how the state society gradually evolved within the region and spread to a significant extent during the end of the 13th century. Moreover, as stated, one can see the influence of various south Indian dynasties in the political formation of Kongu right from the beginning of the Classical period. But none of these dynasties could bring this region under their full sovereignty and administrative system. We have noticed that the grants were made mostly by local persons including peasants, traders, private individuals and so on, to the temple, brahmins and to the temple functionaries. In such case, these grantees never became a powerful local chief performing the intermediate role.

The underlying meaning of Burton Stein's approach is closer to the ideas of stagnant society and despotic rule. Stein can be credited for his perception about the regional variation in the political authority of Cholas. But his 'centre-periphery dichotomy' mainly supports his ideas of the absence of class conflicts and social tension in medieval south India. The changing internal structure of *nadu* as a result of agrarian expansion and increasing private ownership over land has been ignored in segmentary state theory.⁴²

While it is correct to say that the influence and political authority of Chola rulers was relatively less in the peripheral regions, the idea that they were integrated through the ritual sovereignty is not quite convincing. We have shown how a composite ruling class emerged from basically rural peasantry and how they were able to legitimise their power through religious ideology. We have also argued how such ideologies were important in the context of structural changes in the society with the spread of agrarian settlement. In other words, brahmanism provided suitable ideological support for the existence of the newly emerged social hierarchy and class division. Therefore, it is not ritual authority of the Chola that integrated the peripheral zones with the Chola state. If at all peripheral regions were part of Chola state, the strength and power of individual rulers would have helped much for such integration. The presence of religious institutions in peripheral zones signifies the emergence local ruling elites in those areas rather than extension of ritual authority of the central rulers. With regard to the

⁴² Burton Stein, *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, op.cit.

centralized taxation, our analysis on tax terminology shows how the surplus was extracted from the primary producers through a well-developed tax system. Though it is not quite clear how the taxes reached the state treasury, the instruction given by the rulers to *nattar* and other assemblies, the authority of the king to exempt the donated land from all taxes, and donation of *iraili* lands by the rulers shows the power and existence of the state upon the various taxes. The kings, in several instances, have sent *olai* (order) to local authority to divert certain taxes to temple. It is applicable both in case of Chola rulers in the Kaveri region and the *konattar* rulers in the Kongu region. Finally, though *nattar* exercised a relatively high authority within *nadu*, they are not the sole representatives of *nadu*. In several instances they had to work with the collaboration of *sabha*, *ur* and *nagaram*. These individuals assembly have functioned separately without any instruction or association with *nadu* assembly. Even the tax collection, donation of tax free lands, etc were sometime carried out by these assemblies. Therefore, there is a considerable regional variation in the function of *nadu* assembly.

To reiterate the major argument once again, the state formation in Kongu should be studied from the perspective of how it developed within the regional contexts and what are the internal and external factors that contributed for such development. Similarly, the political process and the emergence of state need to be studied with the necessary changes in socioeconomic formation. Considering this, we have noticed that the socio-economic condition of Kongu during the period of the Pallava and the beginning of the Cholas was more similar to semi-tribal pastoral society and economy. In this juncture, characterizing them as part or segment of the above said dynasties, which displayed a full-fledged state system at that time, cannot be acceptable. The idea of explaining the process in terms of 'local state formation' seems more appropriate to characterize what happened in the Kongu region during the early medieval period.⁴³ Therefore, we conclude that the state formation in Kongu can be characterized as one where 'local state formation' was emerging within the overall regional set-up. It was neither a changeless society nor was in part of a full unitary set-up. It was definitely not the part of decentralized state and though it had some features of a segmentary state in terms of its ecological peculiarity, it actually exemplifies the various dimensions of local state formation as a result of both internal and external influence.

⁴³ B.D.Chattopadhyaya, *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, p.17.

6. The Complexity Ahead

From the evolutionary perspective, what is emerging at this point is that there is a visible change even in the basic structure of the society that hitherto rested upon an agro-pastoral subsistence economy. The ideology of heroism gradually crumbled giving way to the dominance of brahmanism. Tribes began to take up new role in the changed scenario, some became full-time agriculturalist while other adhered to their traditional occupation. As a result it led to a social hierarchy based mainly on their role in the production along with their overall status in society from the perspective of brahmanism. Brahminical ideology began to penetrate into the local level particularly the local elites, aspiring for power. At political level, the segmented chiefs were centralized by both ideological and political means. The models of state developed in the Pandya and Chola regions were adopted and there was, at first time, an independent state incorporating all parts of the region emerged. Nadu became basic territorial unit and chiefs of these *nadu* were big landholders, who sometime acted as representative of both state and *nadu*. There was specialized administrative mechanism employed mainly through the institution of temple.

The transformation from pastoralism to agrarian production, the emergence of state mechanism and incoming of brahminical ideology all set out another stage in the evolution of complexity. The next stage marked by the ordering of various occupational groups in the social hierarchy in accordance with 'Hinduism', migration of new social groups and multiplication of castes, mobility and emulations and thus restructuring of caste hierarchy, mixture of local cults in the Brahminical pantheon, adaptation of Sanskrit rituals in local cult practices, constructing mythological history of caste, emergence of another set of ruling classes and social division of caste into two groups, i.e., left and right hand groups. From the inscriptional analysis in this chapter we saw how a new cultural trend envisaged by brahmanism reached the local elites. But still, to what extent these Sanskrit elements reached or adopted by the rural folk was uncertain. Basically, it seems that the caste has not yet taken its rigid shape. We have discussed that most of titles used during this stage became either caste or caste titles during the later period. Similarly, there were fewer references to caste names in the inscription. The appearance of the names, such as *vellalan*, *puluvan*, *vettuvan*, *kammala*, *kaikola*,

thachan, vetkovar, kollan, etc., seems to refer their occupational identity rather than the caste identity. Therefore, these various occupational categories began to be ordered in a hierarchy only after the process of amalgamation of the brahminical tradition of ruling class and local tribal tradition of rural folk is complete.

Chart-3: Inscriptions (11th CE to 13th CE)

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century			
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th	
1	Rasipuram																	x			x		x							x		
2	Atthur								x					x																	x	
3	Atthur														X														10th			
4	Rasipuram						x	x													x		x							x		
5	Atthur								x	x													x							x		
6	Atthur								x	x				x									x							x		
7	Atthur																						x								x	
8	Atthur																						x								x	
9	Atthur								x	x				x									x								x	
10	Atthur																						x									
11	Atthur																						x								x	
12	Atthur								x	x			x	x									x								x	
13	Atthur								x	x			x	x																		
14	Atthur								x					x							x			x							x	
15	Atthur						x																	x				x			x	
16	Atthur																															
17	Atthur																															
18	Atthur								x	x			x	x										x							x	
19	Atthur													x										x							x	
20	Atthur			x					x	x			x	x										x							x	
21	Atthur						x					x	x											x							x	
22	Atthur						x		x		x			x		x					x			x							x	
23	Atthur								x		x				x													x				x
24	Atthur						x			x	x				x		x											x				x
25	Atthur									x				x	x													x				x
26	Atthur								x						x		x							x								x
27	Atthur								x			x			x									x								x
28	Atthur							x	x			x			x						x			x							x	
29	Atthur								x	x	x				x		x				x			x								x
30	Atthur								x		x				x									x								x
31	Atthur																											x				x
32	Atthur																															x
33	Thiruchenkodu																									x						x
34	Rasipuram																						?									x
35	Rasipuram				x					x													x									x
36	Thiruchenkodu														X																	
37	Salem																							x								x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors					10. Local Institutions							11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
1																										ISN-7
2	X								?			x		x				x								ARIE-405-1913
3			x						?				x													SII-19-351
4	X										x													x		ISN-17
5	X										x	x								x						ARIE-117-1913
6	X					x					x	x						x				X				ARIE-416-1913
7	X			x						x		x														ARIE-418-1913
8																		x				x				ARIE-435-1913
9	X					?							x					x				x				ARIE-410-1913
10			x							x																ARIE-437-1913
11										x		x						x								ARIE-415-1913
12						?				x		x							x							ARIE-436-1913
13	x					x							X													ARIE-424-1913
14	X					x							x							x						ARIE-429-1913
15		x			x				?	x		x														ARIE-439-1913
16	X								?		x	x														ARIE-414-1913
17																										ARIE-426-1913
18	X								?			x	x							x						ARIE-425-1913
19					x	?				?	x		x							x						ARIE-138-1913
20	X							x				x			x	x			x							ARIE-132-1913
21	X					x	x						x		x											ARIE-419-1913
22	X								?				x							x						ARIE-448-1913
23	X								x				x					x								ARIE-453-1913
24	X										x		x					x			x	x				ARIE-446-1913
25	X								x		x		x					x				X				ARIE-454-1913
26	X									x			x					?				x				ARIE-455-1913
27	X										x		x								x					ARIE-441-1913
28	X					x					x		x							x						ARIE-442-1913
29	X					x					x		x													ARIE-443-1913
30	X					x					x		x							x						ARIE-444-1913
31					x				x			x						?			x					ARIE-421-1913
32				x									x					x			x					ARIE-447-1913
33				x						x																ARIE-7-1913
34					x											x										ISN-69
35					x										x	x	x									ISN-70
36						?				?																ISN-75
37																										SII-4-166

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century		
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
38	Salem																														x
39	Namakkal									x	x																				x
40	Namakkal																													x	
41	Namakkal		x																											x	
42	Namakkal																												10		
43	Namakkal		x																												x
44	Namakkal		x																												x
45	Namakkal																														xx
46	Rasipuram																														x
47	Rasipuram																				x	x	x								x
48	Rasipuram													x									x								x
49	Thiruchenkodu																									x					x
50	Namakkal	x																					x								x
51	Namakkal																						x						10th		
52	Namakkal																						x								x
53	Namakkal																						x								x
54	Namakkal							x														x	x						x		
55	Namakkal																					x	x								10th
56	Namakkal																						x								10th
57	Namakkal																						x								10th
58	Namakkal							x															x								10th
59	Namakkal																						x								10th
60	Namakkal																												x		
61	Namakkal																						x								x
62	Namakkal																						x								x
63	Namakkal																						x								x
64	Namakkal																						x								x
65	Namakkal																						x								x
66	Namakkal			x																											x
67	Namakkal			x																											x
68	Namakkal																														x
69	Namakkal			x					x																						x
70	Rasipuram							x																x							x
71	Rasipuram			x																				x							x
72	Rasipuram			x																				x							x
73	Rasipuram													x	x						x		x			?					x
74	Rasipuram																						x			?					x
75	Salem								ku														x			?			10		

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
38																										ISN-64
39	X					?							x													ISN-84
40				x						x																ISN-85
41				x																						ISN-85
42								x																		ISN-86
43				x						x																ISN-87
44				x						x																ISN-48
45				x						x																ISN-48
46	x		x							x																ISN-89
47	x									x	x															ISN-95
48	x								?													x				ISN-96
49	x								x																	ARIE-40-1913
50				x						x														x		ARIE-43-1913
51																		x		x						ISN-106
52																		x								ISN-107
53	x										x															ARIE-370-1940
54	x										x	x								x						ARIE-468-1913
55	x									?			x													SII-19-274
56	x										x		x													SII-19-275
57	x									x		x	x													SII-19-409
58			X									x														SII-19-291
59	x									x					x											SII-19-360
60	x											x					x			x						ARIE-494-1930
61			X										x													ARIE-490-1929
62					x		x						x	x	X											ARIE-502-1929
63			x												X											ARIE-499-1929
64					x									x	X											ARIE-500-1929
65			X		x								x		x											ARIE-501-1929
66										x					x					X						ARIE-496-1929
67	X	x					x			x																AIR-492-1929
68	x									x							x									AIR-493-1929
69	x							x		x		x														AIR-495-1929
70	x						x					x	x	x		x								x		ISN-136
71				x				x																		ISN-137
72				x				x																		ISN-138
73	x									x																ISN-141
74				x						x																AIR-455-1925
75	x									x																SII-4-150

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century				
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th		
76	Salem						x								x										?				10th				
77	Salem																								x				10th				
78	Salem																								x				10th				
79	Salem						x																		x				10th				
80	Salem						x																		x				10th				
81	Salem						x						x	x	x	x						x						x			x		
82	Salem						x								x							x			x						x		
83	Salem					x																			x						x		
84	Salem																								x						x		
85	Salem																								x						x		
86	Salem															x									x						x		
87	Salem	x														x									x						x		
88	Salem						x									x									x						x		
89	Salem	x																							x						x		
90	Salem							x					x	x								x				x					x		
91	Salem																									x						x	
92	Salem															x									x							x	
93	Salem																															x	
94	Salem																															x	
95	Salem																															x	
96	Salem																															x	
97	Atthur																															x	
98	Atthur	x									x											x			x							x	
99	Atthur	x								x	x	x										x	x									x	
100	Atthur													x	x									x								x	
101	Atthur																								x							x	
102	Atthur									x	x			x	x										x							x	
103	Atthur									x	x	x		x							x			x	x							x	
104	Atthur									x	x			x	x						x			x								x	
105	Atthur										x				x							x										x	
106	Omalur													x	x																		x
107	Omalur									x	x				x						x				x							x	
108	Omalur							x		x				x		X						x	x		x							x	
109	Omalur							x							x						x			x		x						x	
110	Omalur							x		x			x		x						x	x	x		x							x	
111	Omalur							x		x	x			x	x						x	x	x		x							x	
112	Omalur							x		x	x			x	x	X					x		x					x				x	
113	Omalur							x		x				x								x						x					x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Cherty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
76		x		x						x							x									SII-4-141
77		x						x																		SII-4-148
78		x																								SII-4-147
79		x						x																		ISN-147
80		x								x		x														SII-4-149
81	x										x	x					x									SII-4-160
82	x									x										x						SII-4-161
83				x						x																SII-4-157
84				x						x																SII-4-158
85				x						x																SII-4-155
86				x						x																SII-4-151
87				x						x																SII-4-143
88				x						x								x								SII-4-144
89	x								?				x										x			SII-4-152
90				x						x																SII-4-153
91												x														ISN-160
92		x																								SII-4-140
93				x						x							x									SII-4-145
94				x						x								x								SII-4-142
95				x						x																SII-4-146
96				x						x																SII-4-159
97	x									?														x		ISN-169
98	x								x	x			x					x								ARIE-461-1913
99	x								x		x		x					x		X						ARIE-462-1913
100		x				x			x		x		x							X						ARIE-458-1913
101	x												x													ARIE-457-1913
102	x								x		x		x					x								ARIE-460-1913
103	x					x			x				x							x						ARIE-459-1913
104	x					x							x								X		x			ARIE-456-1913
105	x					x			x				x													ARIE-463-1913
106	x										x				x											SII-7-30
107										x			x											x		SII-7-25
108	x									x														x		SII-7-24
109	x									x			x		x									x		SII-7-23
110	x					x				x	x		x												x	SII-7-22
111	x									x	x													x		SII-7-20
112	x						x				x		x	x										x		SII-7-26
113	x									x			x											x		SII-7-31

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century		
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
114	Omalur	x						x		x	x			x		x						x	x	x					x		X
115	Thiruchenkodu																						X						x		
116	Thiruchenkodu																						x								x
117	Truchenkodu																								x						x
118	Thiruchenkodu																								x						x
119	Thiruchenkodu																								x						x
120	Truchenkodu																								x						x
121	Thiruchenkodu																								x						x
122	Thiruchenkodu																							x							x
123	Truchenkodu																							x							x
124	Thiruchenkodu																							x							x
125	Thiruchenkodu																							x							x
126	Truchenkodu																							x							x
127	Thiruchenkodu																							x							x
128	Thiruchenkodu																							x							x
129	Truchenkodu																							x							x
130	Thiruchenkodu																							x							x
131	Thiruchenkodu																								x						x
132	Truchenkodu																								x						x
133	Thiruchenkodu																									x					x
134	Thiruchenkodu																										x				x
135	Namakkal	x		x																				x							x
136	Namakkal		x																				x	x							x
137	Namakkal	?		x																					x						x
138	Namakkal															x								x							x
139	Namakkal									x	x				x								x	x							x
140	Namakkal														x										x						x
141	Namakkal														x																x
142	Namakkal								x																						x
143	Namakkal																							x							x
144	Namakkal																							x							x
145	Salem			x										x										x					x		
146	Truchenkodu		x																					x							x
147	Thiruchenkodu															x												x			x
148	Thiruchenkodu															x												x			x
149	Truchenkodu															x									x						x
150	Thiruchenkodu																								x						x
151	Thiruchenkodu								x	x															x						x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference	
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT		
114	x																										SII-7-29
115		x								x																	ARIE-347-1961
116		x								x					x												ARIE-265-1968
117		x								x					x												SII-13-232
118		x								x					x												SII-13-242
119		x								x					x												SII-13-243
120		x								x		x															SII-113-244
121		x								x		x															SII-13-261
122		x								x		x									X						SII-19-219
123		x								x		x															SII-19-298
124		x								x		x															SII-19-299
125		x								x		x															ARIE-626-1905
126		x								x		x															SII-19-426
127		x								x		x															SII-19-427
128		x								x		x															SII-19-429
129		x								x		x															SII-19-430
130																											SII-19-441
131																											SII-19-441
132	x									x		x															ISN-216
133										x					x												ISN-217
134				x						x																	ARIE-294-1961
135	x									x					x												SII-22-1
136	x									x	x				x					x							SII-22-1-9
137	x						x								x	x	x										SII-22-1-5
138	x						x								x	x	x										SII-22-1-14
139	x					x									x												SII-22-1-13
140	x						x								x	x	x										SII-22-1-13
141	x									x																	SII-22-1-8
142			x											x													SII-22-1-10
143				x				x												x							ISN-258
144				x						x																	ISN-259
145				x						x																	ISN-260
146				x			x							x													ARIE-148-1915
147				x						x															x		ARIE-152-1915
148				x													x							x			ARIE-150-1915
149				x						x							x										ARIE-144-1915
150				x			x							x											x		ARIE-145-1915
151				x						x															x		ARIE-146-1915

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century			
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th	
152	Truchenkodu						x																	x							x	
153	Thiruchenkodu								x	x											x			x							x	
154	Thiruchenkodu																					x									?	
155	Truchenkodu	h	e	r	o	s	t	o	n	e																			10th			
156	Thiruchenkodu																					x		x						x		
157	Thiruchenkodu																					x								x		
158	Truchenkodu														x								x								x	
159	Thiruchenkodu									x	x					x				x			x					x			x	
160	Thiruchenkodu						x			x	x			x	x	x						x			x						x	
161	Truchenkodu						x							x	x	x						x									x	
162	Thiruchenkodu															x															x	
163	Thiruchenkodu																														x	
164	Truchenkodu																												x			
165	Thiruchenkodu																												x			
166	Thiruchenkodu													x								x								x		
167	Truchenkodu																							x							x	
168	Namakkal															x														x		
169	Namakkal																												x			
170	Truchenkodu		x																											x		
171	Salem																							x							x	
172	Salem																								x						x	
173	Rasipuram		x																												x	
174	Rasipuram						x								x	x													x		x	
175	Salem														x														x			
176	Salem														x									x							x	
177	Salem																													x		
178	Salem																					x								x		
179	Salem																					x								x		
180	Namakkal													x		x							x								x	
181	Namakkal																							x					x			
182	Namakkal																													x		
183	Rasipuram																							x							x	
184	Rasipuram																													x		
185	Atthur									x		x				x							x								x	
186	Namakkal																												x			
187	Salem																					x										
188	Namakkal								x	x	x																					x
189	Namakkal									x	x			x								x			x							x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
152				x						x																ARIE-147-1915
153	x						x			x					x				x							ARIE-156-1915
154	x									x									x							ARIE-149-1915
155																		x								ARIE-248-1969
156	x																									ISN-278
157	x												x													ARIE-437-1925
158	x									x																ARIE-346-1960
159	x														x											ARIE-263-1968
160	x					x	x																			ISN-283
161	x						x																			ISN-284
162					x		x																			ARIE-264-1968
163		x					x									x										ARIE-372-1940
164		x			x																					ARIE-240-1969
165		x																								ARIE-241-1969
166	x						x							x												ISN-298
167					x		x								x		x	x								ISN-299
168	x						x										x									ARIE-232-1969
169		x																								ARIE-233-1969
170			x							x																ISN-306
171			x					x									x									ARIE-159-1915
172	x									x														x		ISN-310
173					x																					ISN-312
174	x																x									ISN-313
175	x									x																ISN-175
176				x				x												x						ISN-176
177	x									x								x						X		ISN-319
178	x									x																ARIE-8-1931
179	x									x																ISN-321
180	x																									ISN-328
181					x					x																ISN-329
182					x					x																ISN-333
183					x																					ISN-334
184	n	a	d	u	k	k	a	l																		ISN-336
185	x																	x								ISN-337
186					x		x								x											ISN-338
187																										ISN-187
188	x									x																ISN-342
189	x																									ISN-189

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century		
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
190	Attthur																					x									x
191	Avinasi								x	x	x															x				x	
192	Avinasi																								x					x	
193	Avinasi																								x					x	
194	Avinasi																								x						x
195	Avinasi															x									x						x
196	Avinasi																								x						x
197	Avinasi																x								x						x
198	Avinasi						x							x	x	x				x					x						x
199	Avinasi		x																						x						x
200	Avinasi																									x					x
201	Avinasi																									x					x
202	Avinasi																									x					x
203	Avinasi																									x					x
204	Avinasi																			x		x				x					x
205	Avinasi	?												x	x											x					x
206	Avinasi																									x					x
207	Avinasi																									x					x
208	Avinasi						x																			x					x
209	Avinasi																									x					x
210	Avinasi																									x					x
211	Avinasi																														x
212	Avinasi																									x			x		
213	Avinasi																									x					x
214	Avinasi				x																					x					x
215	Avinasi																									x			x		
216	Avinasi																									x			x		
217	Avinasi						x																			x					x
218	Avinasi						x																			x					x
219	Avinasi																									x			x		
220	Avinasi						x																			x					x
221	Avinasi																														x
222	Avinasi																									x					x
223	Avinasi						x																			x					x
224	Avinasi				x	x																				x				x	
225	Avinasi																									x				x	
226	Avinasi				x		x																			x					x
227	Avinasi						x	x	x																	x					x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyan	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
190	x																									ISN-347
191	x					x							x													TNAD-775/03
192					x	x							x	X												TNAD-776/03
193			x				x							X												TNAD-777/03
194					x								x													TNAD-778/03
195	x									x	x		x										x			TNAD-779/03
196			x							x																TNAD-780/03
197					x	x							x								x					TNAD-781/03
198																										TNAD-782/03
199	x									x							x									TNAD-783/03
200					x		x						x		x											TNAD-784-03
201		x								x																TNAD-788/03
202	x					x	x							x												TNAD-789/03
203					x					x																TNAD-790/03
204					x	x																				TNAD-791-03
205	x				x								x													TNAD-792-03
206		x								x																ARIE-582-1922
207		x						X																		ARIE-583-1922
208	x	x			x	x			x		x		x													ARIE-584-1922
209		x							x		x		x				x									ARIE-586-1922
210		x							x				x										X			ARIE-585-1922
211		x							x	x																ARIE-589-1922
212					x																					ARIE-592-1922
213					x		X							x												ARIE-591-1922
214	x							x																		ARIE-590-1922
215		x					X																			ARIE-593-1922
216				x						x																ARIE-595-1922
217		x																								ARIE-97-1922
218										x																ARIE-599-1922
219		x								x																ARIE-601-1922
220	x				x	x																				ARIE-602-1922
221		x																								ARIE-603-1922
222		x						x		x																ARIE-614-1922
223		x						x																		ARIE-609-1922
224		x								x																ARIE-610-1922
225																										ARIE-612-1922
226	x			x																						ARIE-615-1922
227		x				x																				ARIE-616-1922

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities							3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler				7.Century				
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
228	Avinasi						x	x																		x					x
229	Avinasi						x																			x				x	
230	Avinasi								x																						x
231	Avinasi								x	x				x	x																x
232	Avinasi																									x			x		
233	Avinasi																														x
234	Avinasi				x																					x					x
235	Avinasi															X										x					x
236	Avinasi								x																	x					x
237	Avinasi																									x					x
238	Avinasi																														x
239	Avinasi																														x
240	Avinasi								x																					10th	
242	Avinasi																												10th		
242	Avinasi																									x					x
243	Avinasi														x											x					x
244	Avinasi																														x
245	Avinasi																									x					x
246	Avinasi	X	x							x	x			x	x													x			x
247	Avinasi																										x				x
248	Avinasi						x																				x				x
249	Avinasi	45							x																		x				x
250	Avinasi				x		x																			x					x
251	Avinasi	x					x																			x					x
252	Avinasi								x																	x					x
253	Avinasi						x																			x					x
254	Avinasi																										x				x
255	Avinasi		x																							x					x
256	Avinasi													x												x					x
257	Avinasi								x																	x				x	
258	Avinasi								x																	x					x
259	Avinasi																									x					x
260	Avinasi																									x					x
261	Avinasi								x																	x					x
262	Avinasi			x																						x					
263	Avinasi	x																													
264	Avinasi									x	x																				
265	Avinasi																														

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
228		X								X														X		ARIE-617-1922
229				X																						ARIE-618-1922
230					X	X																				ARIE-627-1922
231	X					X												x					x			ARIE-630-1922
232					x					x																ARIE-594-1922
233					x																					ARIE-605-1922
234				x						x																TNAD-834/03
235			x				x										x									ARIE-594-1922
236		x								x																ARIE-620-1922
237				x																						ARIE-619-1922
238	x					x						x												x		TNAD-838-03
239				x																						TNAD-839-03
240				x						x																ARIE-594-1922
241				x						x																ARIE-594-1922
242		x						x								x										TNAD-843/03
243	x					x												x				x	x			TNAD-594/1922
244		x								x																TNAD-848/03
245		x								x																TNAD-854/03
246	x						x								x											TNAD-861/03
247			x					x																		TANAD-863/03
248		x								x																TNAD-864/03
249		x						x																		TNAD-865/03
250		x									x															TNAD-866/03
251		x								x																TNAD-867/03
252			x					x																		TNAD-868/03
253		x									x											x				TNAD-869/03
254		x						x																		TNAD-870/03
255					x		x							x												TNAD-871/03
256	x					x																				TNAD-872/03
257		x								x																TNAD-873/03
258				x						x																TNAD-874/03
259		x								x																TNAD-875/03
260		x								x																TNAD-878/03
261		x								x																TNAD-879/03
262		x								x																TNAD-880/03
263		x																								TNAD-881/03
264	x					x																				TNAD-882/03
265	x					x																				TNAD-883/03

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler				7.Century			
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
266	Avinasi																									x					x
267	Avinasi				x																					x					x
268	Avinasi																									x					x
269	Avinasi																									x			x		
270	Avinasi						x																			x					x
272	Avinasi						x																								x
272	Avinasi						x		x																	x				x	
273	Avinasi																														x
274	Avinasi												x														x				x
275	Udumalaipetai						x		x																						x
276	Udumalaipetai						x							x																	x
277	Udumalaipetai						x																								x
278	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
279	Udumalaipetai																									x					
280	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
281	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
282	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
283	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
284	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
285	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
286	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
287	Udumalaipetai																														x
288	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
289	Udumalaipetai	x																										x			x
290	Udumalaipetai						x																			x					x
291	Udumalaipetai													x																	x
292	Udumalaipetai												x																		x
293	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
294	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
295	Udumalaipetai	x																								x					x
296	Udumalaipetai	x																								x					x
297	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
298	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
299	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
300	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
301	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
302	Udumalaipetai	x		x					x																	x					x
303	Udumalaipetai																											x			x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
266			x					x																		TNAD-884/03
267		x					x			x				x												TNAD885/03
268		x																								TNAD-888/03
269		x								x																TNAD-889/03
270		x						x		x																TNAD-890/03
271		x						x		x																TNAD-892/03
272		x								x																TNAD-893/03
273		x																								TNAD-897/03
274	x					x																				TNAD-989/03
275	x									x																TNAD-1/04
276	x					?												x								TNAD-3/03
277	x					x																				TNAD-4/03
278	x										x							x								TNAD-5/04
279				x					x				x													TNAD-6/04
280				x					x	x	x															TNAD-7/04
281				x						x																TNAD-8/04
282				x						x								x								TNAD-9/04
283				x																						TNAD-10/03
284				x						x																TNAD-11/03
285				x						x																TNAD-13/03
286				x						x								X								TNAD-14/03
287				x						x																TNAD-15/04
288					x						x											X				TNAD-16/04
289	x									x								X								TNAD-17/04
290		x								x																TNAD-18/04
291	x								x		x															TNAD-19/04
292	x																									TNAD-20/04
293				x						x																TNAD-21/04
294				x						x																TNAD-22/04
295				x						x																TNAD-24/04
296				x						x								x								TNAD-25/04
297				x						x																TNAD26/04
298				x						x								x								TNAD-27/04
299				x						x																TNAD-28/04
300				x						x																TNAD-29/04
301				x						x								x								TNAD-30/04
302				x						x																TNAD-31/04
303				x						x														X		TNAD-32/04

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century		
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 ⁱⁿ	13 th
304	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
305	Udumalaipetai																														x
306	Udumalaipetai																														x
307	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
308	Udumalaipetai																														x
309	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
310	Udumalaipetai	x																								x					x
311	Udumalaipetai							x																		x					x
312	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
313	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
314	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
315	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
316	Udumalaipetai					x																				x					x
317	Udumalaipetai																														x
318	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
319	Udumalaipetai																														x
320	Udumalaipetai																											x			x
321	Udumalaipetai																														x
322	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
323	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
324	Udumalaipetai	x																								x					x
325	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
326	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
327	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
328	Udumalaipetai	x																								x				x	
329	Udumalaipetai																									x				x	x
330	Udumalaipetai																									x					x
331	Udumalaipetai														x											x					x
332	Udumalaipetai							x																		x					x
334	Udumalaipetai																														x
335	Udumalaipetai																														x
336	Udumalaipetai							x																							x
337	Udumalaipetai								x																	x					x
338	Udumalaipetai								x																	x					x
339	Udumalaipetai																														x
340	Udumalaipetai	x																													x
341	Udumalaipetai																														x
342	Udumalaipetai														x																x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brahamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyan	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
304		x																					X			TNAD-35/04
305		x																								TNAD-37/04
306	x		x																							TNAD-38/04
307		x																								TNAD-39/04
308		x								x								x								TNAD-42/04
309		x								x								x								TNAD-42/04
310		x								x								x								TNAD-43/04
311		x								x																TNAD-44/04
312				x						x																TNAD-45/04
313		x								x								x								TNAD-46/04
314					x					x								x								TNAD-47/04
315	x									x																TNAD-48/04
316			x							x																TNAD-49/04
317		x																								TNAD-50/04
318		x								x								x								TNAD-51/04
319	x										x							x								TNAD-52/04
320	x		x			x																				TNAD-53/04
321			x																							TNAD-54/04
322				x						x																TNAD-55/04
323				x						x																TNAD-56/04
324				x						x																TNAD-57/04
325				x						x									x							TNAD-58/04
326				x						x																TNAD-59/04
327				x						x																TNAD-59/04
328				x						x																TNAD-59B/04
329				x						x																TNAD-60/04
330				x						x																TNAD-62/04
331				x						x								x								TNAD-63/04
332	x						x										x									TNAD-65/04
333		x								x		x														TNAD-66/04
334	x																									TNAD-67/04
335			x																							TNAD-68/04
336	x									x																TNAD-69/04
337	x									x								x						x		TNAD-70/04
338	x									x	x							x						x		TNAD-71/04
339		x																								TNAD-72/04
340		x								x																TNAD-73/04
341	x		x							x	x							x								TNAD-74/04
342	x									x	x							x								TNAD-76/04

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century		
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
343	Udumalaipetai					x																		?							x
344	Udumalaipetai																								x						x
345	Udumalaipetai																								x						x
346	Udumalaipetai																								x						x
347	Udumalaipetai					x																			x						x
348	Udumalaipetai								x						x										x						x
349	Udumalaipetai						x																		x						x
350	Coimbatore														x										x						x
351	Coimbatore	x																										x			x
352	Coimbatore						x																				x				x
353	Coimbatore	x																							x						x
354	Coimbatore																								x						x
355	Coimbatore																								x						x
356	Coimbatore																								x						x
357	Coimbatore																								x						x
358	Coimbatore	x																							x						x
359	Coimbatore	x															x								x						x
360	Coimbatore																								x				10th		
361	Coimbatore													x	x										x						x
362	Coimbatore																								x						x
363	Coimbatore																								x						x
364	Coimbatore																								x						x
365	Coimbatore																								x						x
366	Coimbatore																								x						x
367	Coimbatore								x																						x
368	Coimbatore						x																				x				x
369	Coimbatore													x	x												x				x
370	Coimbatore													x											x						x
371	Coimbatore	x						x																	x						x
372	Coimbatore														x													x			x
373	Coimbatore													x	x													x			x
374	Coimbatore		x	x						x	x			x	x						x		x			x					x
375	Coimbatore																				x	x				x					x
376	Coimbatore																								x						x
377	Coimbatore													x											x						x
378	Coimbatore																								x						x
379	Coimbatore		x								x					st							x			x					x
380	Coimbatore																								x						x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
343					x	x																				TNAD-77/04
344	x									x																TNAD-78/04
345				x						x	x															TNAD-79/04
346				x						x																TNAD-80/04
347																										TNAD-81/04
348					x	x															x					TNAD-83/04
349					x	x												X					X			TNAD-84/04
350					x	x											X									TNAD-86/04
351					x	x								x			x									TNAD-87/04
352	x																									TNAD-88/04
353	x				x																					TNAD-89/04
354	x																									TNAD-90/04
355	x									x			x													TNAD-91/04
356	x									x																TNAD-92/04
357	x									x	x															TNAD-93/04
358	x									x																TNAD-94/04
359	rajkesari peruvazhi																									TNAD-899/03
360	x					x						x	x									X				TNAD-95/04
361	x									x	x															TNAD-96/04
362	x																			X						TNAD-97/04
363	x							x																		TNAD-98/04
364											x						x									TNAD-99/04
365				x							x															TNAD-100/04
366				x							x															TNAD-101/04
367	x										x															TNAD-102/04
368	x					x						x	x													TNAD-104/04
369			x				x																			TNAD-105/04
370	x										x												x			TNAD-106/04
371	x										x						X									TNAD-107/04
372	x									x				x	x											TNAD-110/04
373	x					x						x	x													TNAD-111/04
374	x				x																					TNAD-112/04
375					tax	x																				TNAD-113/04
376	x										x			x			x							x		TNAD-114/04
377	x					x						x	x	x												TNAD-115/04
378					x	x																				TNAD-116/04
379					x			x										x								TNAD-177/04
380	x						x							x			X									TNAD-118/04

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler				7.Century			
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
381	Coimbatore														x							x			x						x
382	Coimbatore																					x			x						x
383	Coimbatore																								x						x
384	Coimbatore														x							x			x						x
385	Coimbatore																								x						x
386	Coimbatore																								x						x
387	Coimbatore																								x						x
388	Coimbatore																			x					x						x
389	Coimbatore																														x
390	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
391	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
392	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
393	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
394	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
395	Coimbatore																									x					x
396	Coimbatore						x																			x					x
397	Coimbatore	x						x																		x					x
398	Coimbatore								x																	x					x
399	Coimbatore			x				x	x																	x					x
400	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
401	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
402	Coimbatore					x																									x
403	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
404	Coimbatore																									x					x
405	Coimbatore		x																							x					x
406	Coimbatore	x																								x					x
407	Coimbatore								x																	x					x
408	Coimbatore					x																				x					x
409	Coimbatore		x																							x					x
410	Coimbatore																									x					x
411	Coimbatore	x	x																							x					
412	Coimbatore																														x
413	Pollachi																														x
414	Pollachi	x																										x			
415	Pollachi														x											x					x
416	Pollachi						x								x												x				x
417	Pollachi																									x					x
418	Pollachi																									x					x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
381	x								x																	TNAD-119/04
382												x														TNAD-120/04
383	x						x										X									TNAD-121/04
384					x				x			x	x													TNAD-122/04
385				x						x																TNAD-123/04
386				x						x																TNAD-124/04
387	x																									TNAD-126/04
388					x													x								TNAD-130/04
389					x												x									TNAD-132/04
390		x																								TNAD-136/04
391				x						x																TNAD-138/04
392		x								x																TNAD-142/04
393		x								x																TNAD-145/04
394		x								x																TNAD-149/04
395					x	x						x														TNAD-151/04
396		x						x																		TNAD-155/04
397		x							x	x														x		TNAD-158/04
398					x	x																				TNAD-160-04
399				x						x																TNAD-163/04
400		x								x								x								TNAD-164/04
401				x						x								x								TNAD-165/04
402					x	x																				TNAD-166/04
403		x								x																TNAD-170/04
404					x									x												TNAD-171/04
405		x								x								x								TNAD-173/04
406		x								x														x		TNAD-175/04
407		x			x		x																			TNAD-176/04
408		x								x																TNAD-177-04
409		x								x																TNAD-178-04
410	x													x												TNAD-904/03
411	x						x			x																TNAD-907/03
412					x	x						x														TNAD-908/03
413	x									x													x			TNAD-910/03
414		x								x								x								ARIE-214/1927
415	x			x		x	x			x		x	x	x			x									ARIE-221/1927
416	x									x	x							x								ARIE-223/2004
417			x				x							x												ARIE-224/1927
418					tax	x						x	x													ARIE-217/1927

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century		
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
419	Pollachi																														x
420	Pollachi																									x					x
421	Pollachi																									x					x
422	Pollachi															X												x			x
423	Pollachi															x															x
424	Pollachi																											x			x
425	Pollachi													x	x																x
426	Pollachi						x																		x						x
427	Pollachi						x						x													x					x
428	Pollachi						x																								x
429	Pollachi																														x
430	Pollachi		x																												x
431	Pollachi																														x
432	Pollachi																									x					x
433	Pollachi														x																x
434	Pollachi						x																				x				x
435	Pollachi						x																				x				x
436	Pollachi																														x
437	Pollachi																														x
438	Pollachi																									x					x
439	Pollachi	x																								x					x
440	Mettupalayam							x																			x				x
441	Mettupalayam	x																										x			x
442	Mettupalayam																														x
443	Mettupalayam						x		x																						x
444	Mettupalayam							x																			x				x
445	Mettupalayam	x																								x					x
446	Mettupalayam	x																								x					x
447	Mettupalayam																														x
448	Mettupalayam			x																											x
449	Mettupalayam				x																					x					x
450	Mettupalayam																														x
451	Thiruppur																														x
452	Thiruppur	x					x																				x				x
453	Thiruppur						x																				x				x
454	Thiruppur	x																									x				x
455	Thiruppur																														x
456	Thiruppur	?																								x					x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyan	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
419					x	x											x									TNAD-186/04
420		x									x	x	x					x								ARIE-218/1927
421	x					x						x					x									TNAD-188/04
422	x	x	x																							TNAD-189/04
423					x		x								x		x									TNAD-190/04
424					x			x																		TNAD-193/04
425	x					x																				TNAD-194/04
426		x							x			x														TNAD-195/04
427	x								x									x	x				X			TNAD-196/04
428	x						x						x	x			x									TNAD-197/04
429	x								x				x				x		x				X			TNAD-198/04
430				x						x																TNAD-911/04
431			x							x																TNAD912/03
432		x								x																TNAD-199/04
433	x									x																TNAD-202/04
434					x		x							x												TNAD-915-03
435					x		x																			TNAD-916/04
436	x													x												TNAD-918/03
437					x		x																			TNAD-919/03
438		x			x																					TNAD-922/03
439				x																						ARIE-392/1954
440		x																						x		ARIE-227/1950
441																										ARIE-228/1950
442																								x		TNAD-937/03
443		x								x																TNAD-939/03
444		x								x																TNAD-940-03
445					x					x																TNAD-943/03
446										x																TNAD-944/03
447		x																								TNAD-945/03
448		x								x																TNAD-946/03
449					x					x																TNAD-947/03
450																										TNAD-948/03
451				x																						TNAD-955/03
452		x								x																TNAD-257/04
453		x																								TNAD-204/04
454		x								x																TNAD-205/04
455		x								x																TNAD-206/04
456				x						x																TNAD-189/04

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler				7.Century				
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th	
457	Thiruppur																									x						x
458	Thiruppur																			x						x			x			
459	Thiruppur								x																	x					x	
460	Thiruppur	x					x																				x				x	
461	Thiruppur	x					x																				x				x	
462	Thiruppur								x																		x				x	
463	Thiruppur	x					x	x																		x					x	
464	Thiruppur																										x				x	
465	Thiruppur								x																		x				x	
466	Thiruppur																										x				x	
467	Thiruppur						x																				x				x	
468	Thiruppur							x																			x				x	
469	Thiruppur						x																				x				x	
470	Thiruppur						x																				x				x	
471	Thiruppur																										x				x	
472	Thiruppur						x		x																		x				x	
473	Thiruppur							x															x				x				x	
474	Thiruppur						x																								x	
475	Palladam																														x	
476	Palladam																														x	
477	Palladam																														x	
478	Palladam																														x	
479	Palladam	x																													x	
480	Palladam																														x	
481	Palladam																														x	
482	Palladam																						x								x	
483	Palladam		x																												x	
484	Palladam		x																							x					x	
485																																
486	Erode						x																					x			X	
487	Erode	X								x	x												x			x		10th				
488	Erode						x			x	x		x							x		x				x		10 th				
489	Erode									X	x									x							s				x	
490	Erode																											x			X	
491	Erode																									x					X	
492	Erode																										X				x	
493	Erode												x	x									x				x				x	
494	Erode												x																x		X	

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference	
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT		
457			x							x																	TNAD-211/04
458					x					x																	TNAD-215/04
459		x						x																			ARIE-206/1965
460		x								x															x		ARIE-212/1965
461		x								x																	ARIE-959/03
462		x								x																	ARIE-960/03
463		x								x														x	x		ARIE-211/1965
464	x							x																			TNAD-962/03
465		x								x																	TNAD-963/03
466				x							x			x													TNAD-964/03
467		x								x																	TNAD-965/03
468		x						x																x			ARIE-210/1965
469		x									x							x									TNAD-967/03
470		x						x																			TNAD-968/03
471		x									x							x									TNAD-969/03
472		x									x							x									TNAD-970/03
473					x	x	x	x																			TNAD-971/03
474						x						x															TNAD-218/04
475		x								x																	TNAD-219/04
476		x								x																	TNAD-220/04
477					x	x						x															TNAD-221/04
478																											TNAD-222/04
479																		x									TNAD-223/04
480				x						x																	TNAD-224/04
481					x							x															TNAD-225/04
482	x																										TNAD0226/04
483					x					x																	TNAD-227/04
484		x								x										x							TNAD-228/04
485																											Irukkur CP
486				x				X																			ARIE-225/1963
487	x					x							x					X									SII-4:413
488	X																										SII-4:416
489	x						x								X												SII-4:417
490	X										X																TNAD-1007/03
491	X										X							X									ARIE-1967-68
492				x						X																	ARIE-1967-68
493					x					X																	ARIE-2841/1961
494		x				x							X														SIKS-1:252

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler				7.Century			
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
495	Erode									x	x			x												x					X
496	Erode		x																											X	
497	Erode	x																								x					X
498	Erode																														
499	Erode										x			x														x			X
500	Erode	x																									x				X
501	Erode	x																									x				X
502	Erode	x																									x				X
503	Erode																										x				X
504	Erode																										x				X
505	Kangeyam		x																								x				X
506	Kangeyam																														X
507																															
508	Kangeyam																										X				X
509	Kangeyam																											x			X
510	Kangeyam																										x				X
511	Kangeyam																										X				X
512	Kangeyam		x																									x			X
513	Kangeyam																										X				x
514	Kangeyam																										x				X
515	Kangeyam																										x				X
516	Kangeyam																										x				X
517	Kangeyam																										x				X
518	Kangeyam																										x				X
519	Kangeyam																										x				x
520	Kangeyam	x																									x				X
521	Gobichettipalayam										x				x							x						X			X
522	Sathyamangalam	x																									X				X
523	Bhavani																										x				X
524	Bhavani																											x			X
525	Bhavani		x																								x				X
526	Bhavani														x													x			X
527	Bhavani		x																								x				X
528	Bhavani																														
529	Bhavani																														
530	Bhavani																										x				x
531	Bhavani																										x				x
532	Bhavani																														x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuvu, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyan	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
495	x					x									x	x		X								SIKS.1:253
496	x					X																				SIKS.1:254
497	x						x								x				X							SIKS.1:255
498				X																						ARIE.288/1961-2
499				x						X																TNAD-269/04
500																										TNAD-274-04
501	x						x							x												TNAD-275/04
502				X																						ARIE-217/1967
503				X																						ARIE.218/1967
504				X																						ARIE.219/1967
505	x	x					x							X												ARIE.221/1967
506				x						X																ARIE.222/1967
507				x						X																ARIE.243/1920
508				x						x								x	X							ARIE.250/1920
509					X																					ARIE.252/1920
510					x					X																ARIE.253/1920
511			x				X																			ARIE.254/1920
512			X																							ARIE.255/1920
513				x						X																TNAD.290/04
514	x							X																		ARIE.158/1910
515	x							X																		ARIE.159/1910
516					x					X																ARIE.160/1910
517					x					X																ARIE.162/1910
518					x					X																ARIE.163/1910
519					x					x								X								ARIE.165/1910
520	x						x									X										ARIE.166/1910
521	x									X																TNAD.305/04
522	x						X																			TNAD.306/04
523																										TNAD.88/05
524		X								X																TNAD.89/05
525					X	X																				ARIE.227/1928
526		X																						X		ARIE.229/1928
527				X			X							X												ARIE.177/1965
528	X																									ARIE.178/1965
529					X		X							X												ARIE.179/1965-6
530					X																					ARIE.180/1965-6
531					X																					ARIE.182.1965
532					X																					ARIE.183/1965

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

NO	8. Nature of Donation					9. Donors						10. Local Institutions						11. Titles								Reference
	Land	Money	Grains	BM	Others	King	LA	TR	OFF	IND	CH	TL	ST	Ur	Nadu	NG	SB	Araiyar	Velan	Alvan	BRR	Rayan	MVN	Mud	KT	
533				X																						TNAD.316/04
534					X																					TNAD.317/04
535		X						X																		TNAD.94/05
536				X						X																TNAD.95/05
537	X									X																TNAD.96/05
538				X						X																TNAD.97/05
539	X						X							X												TNAD.98/05
540				X						X																TNAD.99/05
541	X					X																				TNAD.100/05
542				X						X																TNAD.102/05
543	X					X							X													TNKS.1.299
544		X								X		X														ARIE.275/1920
545					X	X							X													ARIE.276/1920

BM-Building Materials, LA-Local Assembly, TRD-Traders, OFF-Officers, CH-Chiefs, TL-Temple, ST-State, NG-Nagaram, SB-Sabha, BRR-Brahmarayan, MVN-Muventavelan, MUD-Mudhali, KT-Koundan, Kamintan

Sl. No	1.Place	2.Communities								3.Nature of land				4.Nature of Land donation						5.Irrigation				6.Ruler					7.Century		
		Vell	Vett	Che	Kai	Kam	Brh	Mua	Oth	NS	PS	VPN	KVN	DD	Iraili	BD	TNK	MK	Oth	Aru	Kin	eri	oth	Cho	Pan	KC	KP	Oth	11 th	12 th	13 th
533	Bhavani																														x
534	Bhavani		x																							x					x
535	Bhavani																									x					x
536	Bhavani													x												x					x
537	Bhavani		x																							x					x
538	Bhavani		x																							x					x
539	Bhavani																									x					x
540	Bhavani																									x					x
541	Bhavani															x										x					x
542	Bhavani															x										x					x
543	Bhavani															x										x					x
544	Bhavani																									x					x
545	Bhavani																									x					x

Vell-Vellala, Vett-Vettuva, Che-Chetty, Kai-Kaikola, Kam-Kammala, Brh-Brhamana, Oth-Other, NS-Nansey, PS-Punsey, VPN-Varaparrunilam, KTN-Kaduvetti Thiruthiya Nilam, DD-Devadana, BD-Brahmadeya, Kin-Kinaru, Cho-Chola, Pan-Pandiya, KC-Kongu Chola, KP-Kongu Pandya

Chapter VI

Complexity and Social Tension (14th to 16th CE)

Every stage in the development of human institutions is characterized by inherent intricacies and complexities which often stimulate social tension and anxiety. The precise use of these terms in historical context signifies a situation where the internal stratification in terms of caste necessitated the human aggregates to be involved in the quest for power and privileges propelling a persistent tension in society. Here, three kinds of complexities are to be discussed, 1) Societal complexity, the multiplication of caste and clan divisions, 2) Material complexity, the social division of labour determining the material accessibility of each social aggregate and 3) Political complexity, the corporate function of castes in order to retain as well as to accumulate more power and privileges.

Social stratification was not entirely a new phenomenon in Kongu during this period. Divisions based on kin, clan and occupations existed right from the beginning of the classical period. However, what is significant during the period between the 14th and 16th century is that this conglomeration of several culturally distinct occupational groups created a situation to define their power and privileges in the context of emerging caste based social hierarchy. From the discussions in the previous chapters, at least two processes are explicit—1) unification of various occupational categories into a single political and ideological sphere and 2) settlement of numerous immigrant people from various ecological and social backgrounds paving way for the emergence of somewhat rigid social system. Scholarly opinions about caste and social hierarchy in India, discussed in the introductory chapter, enable us to approach the contemporary sources with theoretical insight.

1. Note on Sources

Along with the course of socio-cultural transformation, it is also significant to see the development of the historical traditions. The societal transition brings changes not only in the components of existing social structure, but also in the mode and means through which the historical memory is recorded. In other words, particular mode of production produces not only a particular social system, but also a specific method for documentation. For instance, the oral tradition of the Classical period, herostone inscriptions of post-classical period and long-stone inscriptions of the early medieval period represent the contemporary recording technology of semi-tribal society,

sedentary pastoral society and settled agrarian society respectively. Here the interplay between the socio-economic development and the mode of communication and preservation is explicit.

As society evolves into a complex stage, i.e., caste system, the historical records also get diversified and even enormously multiplied. The emerging new caste groups, particularly those that were in the middle of the caste hierarchy, needed a historical account of their own. The specific nature of the caste, its cultural and social distinctions, privileges and status, and its glorious ancestors and their significant contribution to the community all had to be documented and preserved. It was necessary due to the growing competition among the caste groups for social power and ritual status. The stability and higher position of a caste rely upon its history. The history needed to be told repeatedly and made public. The dominant castes had to keep their social rights and their specific history formally documented in order to avoid emulation from the lower castes. Similarly, the lower castes that have recently risen to power and claimed a new caste status, also had to produce a new history justifying its claim and glorifying its ancestors and their contribution to the welfare of the society.

In Kongu, from the beginning of the 14th century, one can observe that the tradition of stone inscription gradually disappeared and in turn a new category of historical documents, the social documents, began to emerge. Having inscribed on copper plates and palm leaves, they give fair insights about the contemporary social structure, particularly the rural settlement and the function of the caste system. With the painstaking efforts of some archaeologists and linguistic scholars, these social documents have been collected. The text of these documents have already been published in different journals, eg., recently these have been recollected and published in a single volume under the title of *Kongunattu Samuthaya Avanangal* (Social Documents of Kongu Country). The book contains copies of 144 such social documents out of which 50 belong to or narrate the historical events of the period between the 14th and 16th centuries. These 50 documents (see Chart- 4) have been used as primary sources for the discussion in this chapter.

These social documents are significant in the sense that they explicate the people's history. Unlike stone inscriptions, which are merely records of land transactions and temple endowments, the social documents bring to light the cultural aspects of the people. Similarly, the stone inscriptions are temple inscriptions, inscribed

in temple walls. The personages who figure in them are people who were attached with the temple and temple centric activities. Therefore, they express the social history of merely a small section of the society. The social documents, on the other hand, had been collected from people. They, as documents of communities, spell out the collective consciousness and institutions of people. The status and privileges of the castes, their social roles, ancestors, folk gods, rituals, conflicts and disputes, etc., have been recorded. A brief comparison can be made between these two categories of sources.

In addition to the social documents in copper plates and palm leaf manuscripts, there were also oral records in the form of *kula varalaru* (community history). One major difference between the two categories of sources is that the latter is not written and it was handed down orally till the recent time. Though most of these *kula varalaru* still remain in its oral form, recently some scholars have put them in print. They give account of ancestry and their achievements, clan folk gods, etc. Most of the caste groups in Kongu and several clans within these castes have their own *kula varalaru*. There is also another category of oral sources, which narrate the tension between two caste groups on the account of dispute over the territory. There is an indication of endless conflicts between the indigenous people and the new immigrants. At the end, the tradition justifies the claim of immigrants over the territory. *Annamar kathaigal*, *ponnar sankar kathaigal*, etc., can be cited as examples for the tradition of this kind.

The use of the rulers' names and their respective regions help us to date these documents. However, it may be noted that there is considerable room for false dating. A comparative study of the events narrated in copper plates and those in the traditions will provide certain clues to assume their period. Both copper plates and the oral traditions belong to the medieval period, which emphasize upon the caste history and caste regulations. Presumably, the practitioners of the oral narratives seem to be disadvantaged groups, whose politico-economic status was enough to have their history (most of them were new constructions) inscribed in copper plates. To get something inscribed in either copper or stone one needed a special permission from rulers. Most of the medieval records related to privileges and status of caste groups indicate that there was persistent attempt by the castes to get official confirmation for their newly acquired status. Consequently, if their claim is being acknowledged, they will be allowed to inscribe their rights in stone and copper. Documents generally conclude with a statement

of permission, '*kallilum sembilum veti kollalam*' ([it] may get inscribed in stone and copper).

Stone inscriptions also continued to be in practice, but their number had considerably reduced. As usual they record various donations made to the temple and land transactions. However, there are changes in the contents of these later inscriptions. They give the long titles of the donor. Other praises donors' ancestors and their castes. If castes are mentioned with the personal names, the particular clan (*kootam*), in which the donor belongs to, is also prefixed with the caste names. Some of the inscriptions have been signed by several people belonging to several caste groups. Most of them are identified with their caste and clan names. Significantly, there are lot of similarities among the social documents, oral traditions of *kula varalaru* and the stone inscriptions. In several instances, same sentences and phrases have been used in all three traditions.

2. The Scenario of Caste Formation in Kongu

The development of human activities and gradual settlement of various social groups in Kongu have been discussed in the previous chapters. The hilly, forest and semi-arid region did not favour the development of any larger ethnic group. Entire early history of the region is a history of few segmented tribal groups, which at the initial stage occupied various hillocks. Hills were identified as territories of various tribal leaders. The semi-arid plains and thick forest covered areas were source of livelihood rather than a habitation area. Therefore, a larger portion of the region remained the less populated open terrain, which promoted migration particularly from the *thondaimandalam* and *cholamandalam* during the early medieval and medieval period. Even the early tribes of classical period can be identified as migrant of *ceramandalam* and modern Karnataka regions.¹ Names of the early tribes and their cultural aspects can be deduced from megalithic burial remains and classical Tamil literatures. The hunters-cum-pastoral tribes developed a cultural pattern and social practices in which the present regional culture is steeped in. Most of them were previously wandering groups who had just begun to set out for sedentary way of social life. Apart from hunting and herding, yet another important activity with which these early tribes always engaged was fighting. Despite the fact that the early tribes were considerably transformed into sedentary village communities, the pastoral socio-economic set up extended upto the

¹ Arokiaswami, *The Kongu Country*, University of Madras, Madras, 1956, pp.45-46.

10th century CE. The *vettuva*, one of the early tribes, emerged as a powerful ethnic community during the post-classical period. Presumably, the other early tribes could have identified themselves with the *vettuva*, since the major tribe always tends to be emulated by minor ones. In the light of innumerable herostones dated upto the 10th century, the socio-economic formation under the dominance of *vettuva* tribe can be inferred. As stated, till date the socio-political and economic indicators indicate a society of a pastoral nature than a caste based religious society, which was prevalent in other part of contemporary Tamilakam. However, the society was not completely away from the influence of the major religions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism, but these religious ideologies did not intrude much into the local people and alter the basic structure of the society. The region was, therefore, able to retain its traditional life without any drastic transformation.

The pastoral structure of the society altered considerably with the coming of the state promulgating brahmanism from the beginning of the 10th century. With the advancement in agricultural technology and population growth in river valleys of south India, there was a great degree of human spatial displacement. Trained agriculturalists and traders began to settle in less populated areas. Internal development within the tribal structure also favored the societal transformation, particularly imitating the model of state that developed in the Kaveri and the Vaigai regions. Large tracts of forest zone were cleared in order to bring them into cultivation. Canal irrigation begun bringing water to interior areas from river and lakes. Significantly, with the process of ideological legitimization by encouraging the spread of state religion, the brahmanism penetrated into the lower stratum of social structure. Temples for different cults in the pantheon of brahmanical religion were constructed and brahmanical settlements were established. The local elites and chiefs began to attach themselves with both temple and brahmana, which was at the outset in order to maintain the social distance and to legitimize their power over the village communities. Cultivable lands under irrigation were donated to both temple and its functionaries, particularly to the brahmans. Influx of brahmanical culture created a tendency in which it was strongly believed that by incorporating into the high culture and emulating it, the local groups could acquire socio-economic, political power and ritual status. Thereby, at the end of the 13th CE almost all the tribal groups in Kongu incorporated into single system governed by the ideology of brahmanism. Folk traditions, cults and cultural practices were interpreted based on

brahminical texts. And some popular tribal cultural practices were also subjugated and then transformed as a part of high culture. Similarly, social groups which had just incorporated into the brahminism began to reconstruct their genealogical history. Therein ancestors were connected with mythological figures described in Vedic or Tamil Bhakti literature. The process of acculturalization presumably developed and nurtured from both sides, from 'below' and from 'above'. While brahmanism began to absorb the popular cultures and institutions into its domain, by giving entirely a new complex interpretation to such tribal institutions and rituals, tribal groups were also equally anxious to modify their cultural practices on the line of brahmanism. However, interest of these two processes is quite contradictory, the motive of the former was to subjugate the local tribes elucidating their lower status, whereas the intention of the latter was to assimilate them with the higher tradition by inventing their ancestry in the Brahmanical texts. The rush for the assimilation was presumably high among the advantaged occupational groups, which had at the time acquired considerable socio-political and economic status.

Nevertheless, an analysis of records of upto the 13th century suggests the prevalence of uncertainty among the new entrant tribes and migrant communities in situating their place in accordance with the brahminical caste hierarchy. The titles used along with the personal names are either power titles or traditional tribe names or names denoting to the occupation. They were yet to be evolved as caste titles or caste names. Therefore, it can be considered as a precondition to the caste system. *Vettuva*, which was a tribal name, became a caste name during the later period. The word *vellala*, which has relatively a late origin, would have been used to mean a particular occupational group which later became a name of a caste group. Apart from these two communities, other social groups had less numerical strength and they too did not develop, in the new spatial context, into a Jati.

In the beginning, the state society seems to be a class society rather than a society marked by the system of caste. The apparent social stratification at this stage was a class of ruler and a class of ruled. The kinsmen of new state rulers, local chiefs and brahmans formed a composite ruling class, and a mass of peasant folk and variant occupational groups within the peasantry became subjects to be exploited and ruled. Though the brahman and the main ruling lineage had acquaintance with Hindu *varnasaramam dharma* and caste hierarchy, it was entirely a new phenomenon to the

masses. Since brahmins and rulers were foreigners in spatial terms, their legitimization over masses was only feasible either by subordinating the local chiefs using coercive forces or by winning their support by amicable means by recognizing their power and local autonomy. Local chiefs maintaining good relation with both central rulers and brahmins were able to distance their social status from their own folks and thus became part of ruling class. They became patron of Brahmanism in the course of time. To masses, presumably it was not brahmins but the local chiefs, who were ideals for emulation. The titles like *koundan*, *chetty* and *mudali* can be studied in this context. These were basically titles, which were given or assumed by the local chiefs, denoting their administrative or military status. Since these titles are also reminiscent of their economic status and material advantage, all member of the social integrates, to which these title holders belonged, began to use these titles. And therefore, the titles lost their real sense and began to be identified with caste names.

Now the question is how one can situate the precondition of caste system in Kongu. Though the intrusion of brahmanical beliefs and ideologies can be seen as analogues with the process of caste formation, yet there were lot of dissimilarities between these two processes in terms of nature and time frame. However, it can be understood only from how one defines the term 'caste'. If caste is defined as an endogamous system and individuals' caste is determined based on their birth, such features can also be seen in tribal societies or state society which have not yet developed the caste system. The presence of brahmanical settlements, Hindu temples, patronage of local chiefs cannot be assumed to be indications of caste system since these were symbols and practices of ruling elites whose numerical strength was lesser than the ruled, the masses. When masses of different tribes shared relatively a common culture and experienced same material conditions, the leaders of these tribes enjoyed different status and privileges being a ruling section. Therefore, the specific meaning of caste as a rigid socio-cultural system could have developed during the medieval period when brahmanism reached out to the lowest section of the society and when multiple social, occupational and regional groups began to live together.

The assimilation and acculturation of local society into greater Hindu tradition might have happened in two possible ways. First is the indigenous development with response to the conversion of local communities to brahmanical system. Secondly, due to the cultural contact with neighboring regions and settlement of various caste

groups this had already experienced as part of the brahmanical system. When multiple caste groups specialized in particular occupation began to settle in the region, there were changes for indigenous social groups doing same occupation to merge together and to be identified by single caste name probably with clan variations within the caste structure. Therefore, some groups could have lost their tribal name and could have taken a new caste name. Identification with a caste name enabled them to act like a corporation or guild to fight for their right and privileges and to take collective decision in the interest of the caste not only within the region and also at trans-regional level. All developed a condition of prolonged struggle among the castes. Constructing a specific history, cultural and social symbols and distinctness, rules and regulation for members and fighting for privileges and status become necessary for a caste aspiring for upward mobility.

The social history of Kongu between the 14th and 16th century is all about the struggle of various caste groups for stabilization of their power in the existing social system. Taking cue from brahmanical ideology of pure and impure, dominant peasant caste was able to manipulate its power and subordinate alienating castes. The castes which were attached with the previously brahmanical centered settlement were able to retain their power, but seems to be marginalized in spite of their relatively high brahmanized culture. In this context, unlike previous time, brahmans, in person, were not used as agents or legitimizing authority of power and regulators or symbols of caste hierarchy, whereas the idea of brahmanism was taken up and consequently used to strengthen the power and privileges of the landed communities.

From the beginning of the medieval period, the Kongu region became a home of divergent caste and occupation groups consisting of both indigenous and migrants people. The early migrants seem to be the agriculturalists and traders. They were followed by brahmans and then by various skilled artisan groups like builders, goldsmiths, weavers, etc. Since most of the immigrant communities had already converted and incorporated into Brahminism, they had already established their place in the caste hierarchy and possessed some specific socio-economic power and status. Now the local indigenous communities began to mingle with the immigrants and same occupational groups among the indigenous communities began to identify themselves with the caste or caste title of the migrants. Therefore except few castes, all other castes were mixture of both indigenous and migrants people. And some of them began to use

the suffix 'Kongu' with their caste therefore to distinguish themselves with the same caste groups in other part of south India. The influx of various people from different cultural zones gave birth to the distinctive Kongu regional culture, in which the institutions and cultural practices of indigenous people were accepted by the dominant hinduized traditions. Or the indigenous communities could have altered their institutions to suit to be part of the higher tradition. The cultural assimilation in Kongu, i.e., the association of brahmanical tradition, with those of indigenous can be explicitly seen in the context of assimilation of deities of the two traditions. The folk god and goddess that were incorporated into the brahmanical pantheons were presumably placed in the lower places. As the communities were hierarchically arranged according to their status and economic and political power, their folk deities were also arranged hierarchically.

With the enhancement in the socio-economic and political position, the caste began to claim social status. A few references have already been given in the previous chapters. Most of these castes that claimed social privileges, or those were given special rights and status, were immigrants much distinct from local ethnic and clan groups and their social functions were somewhat related to religious institutions. The Irukur copper plate, for example, informs various special rights given to brahmans during the 11th century. The brahman family was allowed to build double storied house, to cement their house, cover their body with green shawl and to use sandal paste over their legs. During the wedding procession, they were allowed to use double conch in the case of the groom and single conch in case of the bride (Chart-3, No.14). Similar sanctions were also conferred upon *kammalar*. In light of another inscription, the families, including *kaikolar* and *devaradiyar*, settled in *thirumadai valakam* (temple street) were entitled to certain special rights. These special privileges certainly helped the social groups to maintain their privileged identity and status and, to some extent, they became models of emulation for others. It also instigated other occupational groups to act collectively and to function like guild or corporation for the socio-economic advancement.

Probably, it would have been the starting point for the construction of mythological history connecting their identity with the personalities figured in the brahmanical texts. During the medieval period, except the outcaste communities, all other had well-developed cultural practices with their specific folk deities, mythological history and collective identity. With this, there was a growing tension among these castes in the middle order of the social hierarchy in order to strengthen their power and

status. However, the two ends of the social hierarchy, i.e., the brahman at the top and the outcasts, such as *paraiyar*, at the bottom remained very silent. The former had already achieved wider reorganization and they were able to retain their position at the top, and the latter at the bottom did not have enough space for social mobility and to them the immediate problem was day-to-day survival.

3. Aspects of Migration, Land Transfer and Pattern of Village Settlements

Migration seems to be a significant factor that determined the evolution of caste system. Migration took place in different historical time for innumerable reasons. There were migrations and settlements of hunter-gatherers in early historic time, cattle breeders during megalithic and classical age, and warriors, religious groups, peasants, traders, artisans, etc., during the early medieval and medieval period. Nevertheless, the human settlement during the medieval period is quite different from the previous ones since it happened among the sedentarized communities with an intension to have permanent settlement by acquiring land rights. The settlement of brahmans and peasants during the early medieval time brought significant changes in the existing agro-pastoral society. With this, there began immigration of a number of depending communities. Brahminical settlements were established, with the support of local influential persons as well as outside rulers like the Chola and Pandiya at newly constructed temple centres. (Chart-3, No.31). It, in course of time, necessitated the incoming of various alien settlements, particularly of artisans, traders and some specialized occupational groups, whose services were vital for the day-to-day functioning of temple rituals. Inscriptional records attest the transfer of land to brahmans and their settlement in various parts of Kongu (Chart-3, No. 12). They also give a detailed description about habitation arrangement for artisans and other temple functionaries in temple streets, *thirmadaivalakam* (Chart-3, No. 41). Similarly, when the local chiefs began to undertake temple construction at the local level, it resulted in immigration of different specialized occupational groups. When indigenous tribes developed into full time peasants and when various peasants communities from various parts began to settle, it also required settlement of alien defending occupational groups for their sustainability. It is not in all cases that the alien occupational groups were migrants, some of them might have developed from the indigenous tribal groups or peasant folks. Newer settlements could also have supported representative of outside rulers. For example

when the Chera, Chola, Pandiya and the Vijayanagara extended their control, it also opened the influx of people from their respective territories.

The stone inscriptions dealing with land donation to brahmans and temple servants drastically came down during the 14th and its subsequent centuries. The brahmans and brahmanical institutions could have lost the support of the rulers like the Chola and the Pandiya. Similarly, the brahmans were no longer able to gain support of the local chiefs as well. For the local chiefs, attachment with the brahmans served their interest in two ways— the closeness with Brahmins enabled them to widen their social distance from the local communities. Similarly, local chiefs achieved the distancing of outside rulers by patronizing brahmans. But during the medieval period, both the political and social scenario had changed. Though still brahmans were considered superior in terms of religion and rituals whereas they were, in terms of political and economic power, subordinated to the dominant landholding communities. Construction of temples was still undertaken. However, it did not require large-scale brahmanical settlements as it was during the 12th and 13th centuries.

The 14th century witnessed a large-scale migration and displacement of peasant settlements within the region as well as from outside the region. There were many instances when lands were transferred from indigenous landholders to new migrant peasants (Chart-4, No.45). Lands were brought into full-time cultivation and thus there emerged a land-based community, which in course of time began to play an important role in determining the social structure. These dominant landlords became not only owner of the land, rather they were owner of the temples. With the settlement of aligning communities, particularly the artisans and manual labourers, the peasant had to get along with various occupational groups. Now the necessity was to ensure the survival and subsistence by aligning with communities while maintaining their subordinate position intact. The peasant based social system seemed to have both flexibility as well as rigidity. Every community had their own space in society, at the same time the space was very limited as they could not act, mobilize beyond certain limit. Let us first look into some examples derived from social documents of these communities.

Case-1: The charter written in palm leaves deals with the migration of *vellala* clans from the Chola country and their settlement in 24 *nadus* of the Kongu region. Three Tamil kings, the Chola, Pandiya and the Cera used to meet every 10 years at a place called Madukkarai for mutual dialogue and settlement of

border related disputes. On one such occasion, the Chola king was not able to attend the meeting since he became insane due to some previous curse of a sage. Feeling sad about this unhappy situation, the other two kings consulted with leading citizens of the Chola country. Referring to the Vedas, it was said that the King might get cured if the *vellala kudikal* of Chola Mandalam visit certain temples including seven Siva temples of Kongu Mandalam after getting *thiktshai* (initiation) from a Sivasubramaniya Panditha Swamy. When the pilgrimage party reached the borders of Kongu, the famous poet Kambanattan refused to let them in as their caste and clan (*kulam* and *gotra*) affiliations were not known. The *vellalas* requested the poet to provide them with those particulars, for which it was accepted that they would pay taxes on marriage, etc., forever. Accepting their request, Kambanattan composed a large number of verses relating to their caste and clan affiliations. A copper plate giving details about caste and clan history was handed over to the pontiff Markanta Kottirattu Anda Gurusami and copy of the same was also inscribed and placed in Sellandiyamman temple. As a result, the Chola King got cured. After this, the *vellalas* are said to have acquired *kani* (land rights) and settled in all the twenty-four *nādu*s of the Kongu. Each *nādu* was given a guru initiated by the Thirukkadaiyur pontiff, and many temples were established (Chart-4, No.1).

This interesting charter is an exaggerated account that probably justifies the *vellala* settlement in Kongu. The same event has been narrated in the text, *cholapurva pattayam*. Though the date and events seem to be irregular and not authentic, the documents provide clear clues to understand the migration of peasants and brahmans probably with the support of the Chola King. Yet another point inferred from this document is that before the settlement of *vellalas* from the Kaveri regions (*cholamandalam*) there were already peasants settlement with clan divisions. The clan divisions were specific to the *vellalas* of Kongu, which could have originated from the tribal tradition of totemic identity.

The *vellalas* of Chola mandalam could have also been instrumental in spreading brahmanical culture and temple centric social formation. The *vellalas* were settled in 24 *nadus*, then 24 Shiva brahmans were brought and each became religious head (Guru) of each *nadu*. Presumably, the document was written during the later period when the *vellala* settlement had developed fully. References to the three kings, the Chola, Pandiya and the Cera, famous temples, learned brahmans, etc., were probably intended to justify the migration and their claim for land rights, so as to avoid the conflict with local communities. More than 25 personal names that appear in this charter are suffixed with the *koundar* title. Another important aspect of this document is the diffusion of folk and brahmanical traditions. The documents begin with mentioning of the seven Siva sites of

the Kongu regions, Chidambaram temple, Thirukkadaiyur temple, etc. But at the end, two things are mentioned. First, if anyone goes against the deed, they will suffer as much as the sin of killing 1000 brahmans and *karam pasu* (she cows) at the bank of Ganga. Second, if people respect this deed, they will get the blessings of local folk goddess. The Names of 30 goddess have been given. The first statement is common in most of the medieval temple inscriptions. At the same time, tribal and folk goddesses rarely appear in the inscriptions. Here, the references to these goddesses' names show closeness of the rural folk with them. Use of the words, such as brahman, *karam pasu* and *Gangai karai*, shows their distance from the masses. Brahmanical rituals and institutions were beyond the imagination of the folk. This is precisely the reason why the folks showed great respects with fear towards them. Finally, the documents attest the specific practice of appointing *kula guru* (community ritual leader). Each clan, caste and *nadu* in Kongu seems to have a *guru*. The *kula guru* can be either brahman or non brahman, but most of the time the former. References to *kani* right villages of *vellala* clans have also been mentioned. Several clans of *kongu vellalas* have *kani padalkal* (songs on land).² They give the history of particular clan's land rights over certain villages, and their movement to other areas and acquiring *kani* rights (land rights) there, etc. The charter seems to be sort of *purana* for the *kongu vellala koundars*. Kongu *vellalar* have been identified here as *thenthisai vellalar*. It could have been written during the later period based on the oral tradition.

According to *kongumandala varalaru*,³ when the tribe such as *vettuvār*, *puluvar* and *kavular* emerged as major caste groups, the Kongu *mandalam* was under the control of the Cera. The Chola rulers established Veerachola *valanadu* and build temples there. They controlled the Kongu Mandalam having their military stationed at Karur. After the Cholas, the region came under the Pandiyas. Muniya Perumal became the ruler of Kongu after the reign of Veera Pandiya, Sundara Pandiyan, Thiruppuvāna Chakravarti and Konerinmai Kondan. Muniya Perumal was deeply disappointed with the immoral habits of the *vettuvār*, *kavular* and *puluvar*. They ate meat, drunk toddy, wore *kovanam* (loin-cloth), and roamed playing *kuzhal* (flute) and *parai*(drum). Then the ruler brought some *vellalar* of *pala* clan from *pandiyamandalam* and they were settled in various parts

² For example, Se.Rasu has collected the *kanipadalkal* of *Athi kulam*, *anthuvan kulam*, *Kadai kulam*, *Valiyan kulam*, *Devendra kulam* and *Keeraikkulam* in his *Keeranur Kaniyalarkal Varalaru* (History of Keeranur Landholders), Kongu Ayvu Mayyam, Tanjore, 1993.

³ S. Soundrapandiyan and Natana.Kasinathan (eds.), *Kongu Mandala Varalarukal* (Histories of Kongu Mandalam), Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai, 1997.

of Kongu. In one instance, a toddy pot was found in *pala vellalar* habitation. Therefore, the *thentisai vellalar* (the vellalar from Cholamandalam) were separated from them. And thus, those who wore saffron dress and sold buttermilk were known as *kongumandalathu velalar*.⁴ There are also numerous similar stories about the origin of *vellala* in general.⁵

Case-2: After their settlement, the *koundars* of 24 *nādus* made mutual agreement with the local labourers. They assured the subsistence of the labourers in lieu of their service. Now the *koundar* felt that there was a need of *navapandam* (pots) and *vetkovar* (potters), they went to Pandiyanadu and requested the *vetkovars* to settle in the Kongu region. When the potters showed reluctance to leave their kinsmen in the *Pandiyanadu*, the *koundars* assured them land rights in their region. On this, 24 potters migrated to Kongu region and settled in 24 *nadu* of the region. Consequently, the potters were conferred certain special privileges which were hitherto rights specific to the *vellala* community. Thereby, they were entitled to 1. the use of a special drum called *kupparai*, 2. wear a ring called *kamothiram*, 3. to take the bride to *nattukkallu* (some wedding rituals) 4. bridegroom can be taken on horseback, and two other wedding rituals. In addition to this, they can also enjoy the rights particular to their caste (*vetkovar*). Then the two parties decided about the service and remunerations (Chart-4, No.33).

The charter narrates the story of *vetkovar* migration to the Kongu region and their settlement in 24 *nadus* along with the *Kongu vellalas*. In addition to a brief note on the *vellala* migration, the names of 24 *vellala* leaders are also given. The document is significant since it gives a clear idea about the settlement of alien communities and their relation with other castes. Some knowledge about the rural settlement can also be inferred. Each caste is entitled to enjoy certain social privileges and rights. A caste can share its rights with others if the service of the latter is necessary. The descriptions on different types of pots and various occasions in which they were used are quite useful to understand the exchange system among the rural folks. The charter also possesses detailed information about the service provided by the potters to other communities as well. The communities such as *palapattar*, *kammala vaduka nayakkan*, *visuvakula asari*, *soliya kula velalar*, *pandiya velalar*, *vaduka asari*, *muppar*, etc., have been mentioned. It could have been written in order to legitimize the role of *vetkovar* in the social function and also to show how the *vellalar*, the dominant peasant caste was grateful to

⁴ Ibid, pp.1-8.

⁵ For example, see, K. Lakshminarayanan, T. Gangadharan and N. Chandrasekar (eds.), *Salem City, an Ethnohistory (1792-1992)*, Sri Swarnambigai Printers, Salem, 1999, pp.66-67.

the *vetkova*, who helped them when there was dire need for pottery. The negotiation for power sharing between these communities is also deducible from the charter.

Case-3: When Gurulinga Raja of *devar* community, ruler of certain part of Pandiya region, passed away, a son from his second spouse, Singaraja by name, usurped the rule with the help of a Thumbachi Nayakkan. After acquiring power, Singaraja put all his five half-brothers in jail. They had to suffer in jail for more than 13 years. They escaped from jail once when Singaraja attempted to kill the brothers and moved from place to place before they arrived in Gangeyam. At Kodumanal, some people of the *devar* community from the Pandiya region had already settled already. These people identified these brothers as sons of their chief, Gurulinga Raja and also remembered the story of their suffering at the hands of the brutal brother and their consequent escape. Consequently, these brothers became heads of these people consisting of 32 families. At the time, there was a dispute between Nallanpillain Sarkarai Manrادیar, ruler of Kangeyam, and Pappa Koundar about certain rights. With the help of the leader of the *devar* community, Sarkarai Manrادیar was able to retain his power. Acknowledging this help, he gave the *kani* rights (property right) of Kodumanal to this community, however with a condition that they should repair the water leakage from Kodumanal dam. The brothers were able to control the water leakage and thus become *kaniyalar* of the region. They were also entitled to have rights over some local temples (Chart-4, No.43).

The charter speaks about the settlement of people belonging to *kanakkan* clan of *devar* community at Kodumanal after shifting their settlement from various places beginning from Thenpandi Nadu. In addition to the migration of the *devar* community, there is a brief description about the transfer of land for irrigation facilities. The charter might have been made to confirm the claim of the *devar* community over the *kani* rights on Kodumanal. People belonging to this caste groups still live in this place.

Case-4 When Chokkalinka Nayakka was ruling Madurai, Veera Vikrama Chozhiyakkoundar was the representative of Thirumuruganpundi, Avinasi and Mangalam regions. Since Chozhiyakkoundar had tax dues of 24000 *pons*, the king ordered him to pay the amount within 3 days, otherwise he will be jailed. Given that situation, three friends of Chozhiyakkoundar, namely Poyyanka Koundar of *panankadai* clan, Sellappa Koundar of *anthai* clan, Saravanak Koundar of *anthai* clan, helped him to pay the dues. In gratitude for this timely help, he transferred the land rights of villages Thirumurugappandi, Avinasi Devasthanam, etc. The transaction was witnessed by several people belonging to different communities including *koundars*, *iyer*, *senapokam*, *sutta sangitham*, *sattriyar*, *pandaram*, *muttiraiyar*, *vaisiyar*, *nagarattar*, *desathar*, *irupathunanku manaiyar*, *Islamiyar*, *kampalathar*, *devankacetti*, *vellalcetti*, *sengunthar*, *panjalar* (*kannan*, *kollan*, *thachan*), *pulavan*, *uppliyar*, *veramushti*, *andi*, *nagapasathar*, *isaikalaighnarkal* (*nattuvan*, *mathalam*, *sangitham*, *nakasuram*,

thavil thasikal, mannudaiyar, vanna, navithan variyar, mallan, etc., (Chart-4, No.3).

Case-5: When Erode was ruled by Alithammagarayar, Chozhiakkaundan, son of Anda Koundan of *panankadai* clan of *kongu vellala* purchased the land rights of Mukunthanallur, Thiruppur, Uthalur, Mannarai from Kasilinka Chetty, a *kongu chetty*, by paying 1000 *pons*. Witnesses were nine *vellala koundars* belonging to *kadai* clan, *payiran* clan, *sathanthai* clan, *porulantha* clan, *enjan* clan and *sivanthi* clan, *sengunthar*, *iyer*, *andi*, *kuyavan*, *navithan*, *thotti*, etc., (Chart-4, No.4).

Case- 6: During the time of Madurai Nayakkas, Kulla Kaliyappa Koundan of *othala* clan and Chennimalai Koundan of *anthai* clan came to Poonthurai Nadu in search of grazing land for their herds and purchased the village Thiruvachi from Velayutha Chetty, a *kongu chetty*, by paying 1500 *pon*. Witnesses were Kangeya Manradiyar, Pattakkaran of Kuruppanadu, *koundars* of different clans, *andi* of Kariyakaliyamman temple, *iyer* of Amnisuparan temple, etc., (Chart-4, No.5).

Case-7: In 1575, Chozhiyandakkoundar of *panankadai* clan of *kongu vellalar* came with his herds to Nallur of Ponkulukki nadu in search of grazing land. At this time, Pavalattan, a *kongu chetty*, who was struggling to pay tax dues, ruled the region. Chozhiyandakkoundar made an agreement with Pavalattan, thereby Chozhiyandakkoundar received *kani* right of the villages Nallur by paying 1000 *pon* and 10 *pothi* of ghee. Chozhiyappan Koundan also received rights over local temples. Witnesses are Soliswaran temple brahman priest, Pechiyamman temple non-brahman priest, Sellandi Amman temple *pandaram*, Kangeya Manradiyar, Pallavaraya Koundar, other *koundars* belonged to different clans, *thotti*, etc., (Chart-4, No.6).

The Cases 4 to 7 extend classical examples for the nature of village settlement and pattern of land transfer. The local chiefs could retain their rights to rule over their region as long as they could pay the required taxes. In case of their failure, the rights will be transferred to others. Similar rights can also be purchased as it was in case of no.4. In Case 6 and 7, two different individuals from other places have purchased lands. It again shows the internal migration within the region. The *kani* rights probably would mean the rights over land, tenant cultivators, temples, other manual labour, etc. The holders of *kani* rights could have been in the charge of tax collection. Herding still had substantial role in the subsistence economy. A purchaser who came in search of grasslands for his herds had bought entire village (Cases 6 & 7). In another instance, a *vellala* herder was wealthy enough to give loan to a *kongu chetty* to pay tax arrears. Consequently, he acquired *kani* rights over certain areas. In Case 4, the lands rights have been transferred from *vellala koundar* to other *vellala koundar*, while *kongu chetty* have sold their rights in Cases 6 and 7. The names of witnesses provide clues to get the

picture of village settlement. The witnesses were generally representatives of different castes. In case of *vellalar*, the titleholders such *manradiyar*, *pattakkarar*, *pallavariyar* appear first and then leaders of various *vellala* clans have been listed. The other representatives are the priests of brahmanical temple (*iyer*), priest of non- brahmanical temple (*poosari*, *andi* and *pandaram*), and representatives of services castes such *paraiyar*, *thotti*, *moopan*, etc. Each caste, seemingly, had some well-defined social functions based on their economic political power. Based on this, the social hierarchy was structured.

Case-8: When Kongu was under the control of Chokkanathar of Madurai, *vellala* people of *porulantha* clan lived in the village of Pidariur in Poondurai Nadu. Chenkoda Koundan, a *vellalar*, married off his daughter to Kumara Velappa Koundan of *anthai* clan and gave lands from Pidariyur. Similar transaction had already been made at the time of Kudumi Vettuvan, Shiva Brahmans and Kongu Chetty had control over this region. When, Kutta Koundan of *enjan* clan married off his daughter to Kuzhanthai Velappa Koundan and gave lands from Pidariyur (Chart-4, No. 8).

Case-10: The *vellalar* settled in this region during the time of the Chera, Chola, Pandiya, Chetty and Shiva Brhamana. Land rights over the villages of Attur, Anjur, Karvazhi, Kodanthur, Karaipparappu, Thalayanallur, Nagampalli were transferred from *vettuva koundars* to *vellala koundars*. The rights over village administration and temple were also transferred. Service communities such as *kanakkar*, *thattar*, *paraiyar*, *navithar*, etc., were appointed in some villages. Land in some cases had been transferred to *vettuva* as well. Both *vettuva koundars* and *vellala koundars* have signed as witness of this agreement (Chart-4, No. 30).

Case-11: The document deals with transfer of land, villages, and temple from *vettuva* community to *kongu vellala* community. *Vettuvar* transferred a quarter of land rights in Thennilai to *perungudi* clan of *vellala* community in lieu of 1000 *pon*. Similarly rights over Neeliyamman temple, Venkapuram Amman temple, Kandyamman temple, Mankala Kaliyamman, Minnampuli Vanniyamman temple were transferred from *vettuva* to *vellala*. However, it was agreed that there would not be any changes in salary and gifts given to temple servants at the time of temple festivals and rituals (Chart-4, No. 31).

These five odd cases again enable us to presume the nature of land transfer and the spatial movements of the peasant folk. Since some documents inform that the *kongu chetty*, *vettuvar* and *shiva brahmans* were early rulers (Cases 7 & 8), before the settlement of *vellala* these regions could have been under the control of these communities. The previous analysis on inscriptions, herostones, and early classical literature shows how the *vettuva* tribe gradually developed in Kongu region. During the early medieval and medieval period, they became chiefs of various parts of the region

and engaged in agrarian production. In Cases 10 and 11, *kani* rights over several villages have been transferred from *vettuva koundars* to *vellala koundars*. The local folk temples played a crucial role among the village communities. Important meetings were held in temple premises in order to decide upon certain public issues. If any documents were made, the copies of them were placed in the temples. The priests of these temples, either brahmans or non-brahmans, were respected. They have been represented in the social documents as signatories or witnesses. If land rights were transferred, the new holders tried to get the rights over the local temples as well. Temples signified the entire village communities. Ownership over temples could have symbolized the ownership over the land and people. The *vettuva* local leaders gradually lost their authority over both the land and temple to the *vellala* leaders, as it is evident from above narrated cases. Another interesting aspect is relationship between landholding peasants and other castes people. If villages were transferred or new village settlements were established, necessary arrangements were undertaken in order to protect the interests of service communities. In case 10, after the settlements of the *vellala koundars*, service communities such as *iyer*, *kanakkar*, *thattar*, *paraiyar*, *navithar*, etc., were facilitated to become part of the village. This gives a classical example to visualize the pattern of a peasant based village settlement. If new communities are incorporated into the system, the duties and salary are fixed beforehand. We have already discussed a charter of *vetkovar* where an agreement was reached between the landholding *vellala* community leaders and incoming *vetkovar* artisans. Wages were generally paid in kind, livestock and money. During the special days such as festivals, weddings, deaths and other rituals days, the service communities were paid extra wages. Otherwise, they might have received annual payment, usually certain share in the agricultural production. Some of them were given lands. The new migrants *vellala* peasants in Case 11 have assured the existing alien communities that there would not be any change in the wage pattern.

Case-11: The *vellala koundars* established their settlement in various parts of Kongu after the meeting of three kings and the rulers of Vijayanagara. Kampanattar helped them in constructing their *kula* identity. Among the *vellalas* who migrated from the Chola country, the people of *kanna* clan settled 16 villages under the leadership Athappa Koundan, Nallana Koundan, Amaravathi Koundan. They had the title of Kannappa Manradiyar. These three had 11 sons who in their time lived separately in different villages. Thus, the people of *kanna* clan gradually sprouted up in these regions. Now, Thirtha Koundan, a descendant of Sivanthi clan, was not able to find a groom for her daughter since she was not beautiful. Some *vellala* grooms ridiculed him when he approached them with marriage proposal. Finally, Senkottu Velappan of *kanna* clan accepted the

proposal but with a condition of transferring the *kani* rights to him. The transfer of *kani* rights was witnessed by several people including *vellalas* of different clans, *iyers*, *andi*, *kongu chetty*, *kangeya manradiyar*, etc., (Chart-4, No.50).

Case-13: (Part-1) There was a dispute among three kings, the Chola, Chera and the Pandiya over the border of their respective territories.. The dispute was amicably solved by Nallathampi Koundar, son of Muthusami Koundar of *kanna* clan. For this, Nallanthampi Koundar was awarded several gifts and the title 'Mumudi Nallathampi Manradiyar'. *Chetty* and *vettuvvars* of this region also accepted the headship of Nallathampi Koundar.

(Part-2) Nallammal, daughter of Kanthasami of *kanna* clan, and Valliyammal belonging to *palli vellalan* caste went to the forest to collect firewood. Once Nallammal refused to give water to Valliyammal since she was belonging to the lower caste. Deeply hurt by this refusal, Valliyammal vowed that she would make her brother to marry Nallampal of *kanna* clan. When Valliyammal's brother with the support of king approached people of *kanna* clan, they escaped from their village. People of *kari* clan and *Chetty* also went along with the of *kanna* clan. Crossing the river *Amaravathi*, the *kanna* clan established several villages over there and further went upto Morur and Thakadappadi, from there they ruled their new settlement areas. Suriya Gangeyan, who was born in *kanna* clan of Morur, ruled this region affiliating to the Pandiya kingdom. At this time, a child born in *kanna* clan of Thakadappadi was able to reach Kannivadi, the motherland of *kanna* clan, with the help of a Nallarandi, and reestablished the rule of *kanna* clan there. Nallarandi, Navithan Nallan, and Paraiyan Kali were honored admiring their immense help in bringing back the glory of *kanna* clan in Kannivadi.

(Part-3) Muthusami Koundar, chief of *kanna* clan of Kannivadi passed away. On this incident, his three wives namely Kaliyammal, Velammal, Sandirayi, his father-in-law Sellappa Koundar and his three close servants committed self immolation (Chart-4, No.19).

These above two examples are given here in order to show the clan structure within the *vellala* community. Interestingly, as the *vellala koundar* have their own history of migration and settlements, major clans of *vellala* community also possess their own antiquities. In the aforesaid two cases, the internal migration and the settlement of *kanna* clan have been described. Though these two instances deal with same clan, but stories given are different. The first charter, after briefing the history of the *vellala* and the *kanna* clan settlements in Kongu, documents the transfer of *kani* rights between two *vellala koundars*. The second document has three separate charters relating to the history of the *kanna* clan. First part narrates the history of the *kanna* clan. As usual the *vellala* migration from the Chola mandalam has also been given. The second part deals with the internal migration of *kanna* clan due to their fight with other clans. The death of a leader of *kanna* clan and immolation of his wife and other servants

are described in the third part. It seems that the history of both *vellala* migration as well as clan settlements were exaggerated construction. It was usual nature of communities to develop their own history therefore to justify their higher position in the newly settled areas. With regard to the relation of the *vellala* with lower castes, it is mentioned *andi*, *navithan* (barber), and *paraiyar* helped to bring back the glory of *kanna* clan and they were subsequently awarded. Similarly, there is also a clue regarding the practice of *sati*. The servants of the chiefs including *navithan* and *paraiyar* also sacrificed their lives. The document explains the event of self-sacrifice in details. Only the summery has been given here. There are also references to the *kongu chetty* and *vettuvur*. When the chief of *kanna* clan received *manradiyar* title and was given rights over certain villages, the *chetty* and *vettuvur* also accepted. Therefore it is once again clear that the before the settlement of the *vellalas*, the major part of the Kongu region was under the control of the above said communities.

Case-13: Koppennak *koundar* of *puluvar* clan of *vettuva* community was ruling Thiruppur independently without paying tribute to Nayakkas. The Nayakka ruler requested Kangeya Manradiyar to control Koppenna and assured him in case of his victory that he would be assigned the administrative right over Thiruppur. Consequently, Koppenna was defeated by Manradiyar and the Thiruppur Fort came under his control. At this time, land-holding *koundars* and other villagers of this locality approached Manradiyar with a proposal for a separate *vellala* barber, because so far there they have only *vettuva* barber. Accepting this request Irupuliyil Kumaran, a barber, was facilitated to settle in Thiruppur. Now, Koppenna took revenge and seized the Thiruppur Fort. At this difficult juncture, Manradiyar had a discussion with other *koundars* of the region and Kumaran, the barber, also happened to be there. Now, Kumaran asserted that if he were allowed he would defeat Koppenna. *Koundars* happily accepted this voluntary offer and assured him gifts in case of his victory. Kumaran defeated Koppenna, who was killed by a *vettuva* barber of the region. Kumaran's wife, a mother of just 15 days baby, met Manradiyar and pleaded that she did not have any other options than committing suicide. At this, Manradiyar and other *koundars* comported her, said they would take care of her family, donated her land and a cow, educated her son, and made some arrangement to train the boy to learn his traditional work (Chart-4, No.48).

Case-14: Ulakappa Kaundan, who had received the title of *Mudalikkamintan* from the Vijayanakara ruler, and several *vellala koundars* of *sellan* clan belonging to different locality of Kongu came together to decide about the land donation to Aththippen, daughter of Kanthappattan. The grantee was also awarded the title 'sellan kula manikki' along with several gifts. The agreement had been witnessed by several people of different communities including *vettuvur*, *archakarakar*, *andi*, *uppiliyar*, *malaiyalan*, *Mudaliyar*, *thachan*, *kollan*, *mooppan* and *thotti*. The arrangement was made during the time of Muthuveerappa Nayakkar of Madurai (Chart-4, No.18).

Case-15: It was decided to undertake a car festival for Kariya Kaliyamman. Pavalatha Koundar, a dominant landholder of the region, got divine permission to conduct the event. However, three days before the festival, the goddess appeared in his dream and informed her desire to have human sacrifice before the car festival. All *koundars* of the village approached Uroman, a *paraiyar*, and discussed with him how to tackle this new problem. Knowing this, Cinnan, another *paraiyar* of the village, escaped from there. Finally, Uroman accepted the request of the *koundars* and prepared to sacrifice his life. However, Uroman's wife requested him that she would sacrifice her life instead. The villager and *pattakkarar* gathered over temple premises. Uroman's wife prayed the goddess for the well-being and long life of the villagers and laid herself under the wheel of temple car. The car ran over her. Even then she did not die. Admiring Uroman's courage and cooperation, the *koundars* made him *kaniyalar* of the Varakka Nadu, donated him lot of gifts and allowed him to enjoy all privileges (Chart-4, No.26)

Here lands were granted to lower caste people on the account of their heroism and voluntary action for the public concern. In fact, it encouraged the social reproduction of certain values in a way to ensure the voluntary cooperation of lower castes. In these three cases the lower castes people have been victimized for the interest of the upper caste landholding communities. In the first case, a *navithan* (barber) was sent to fight with the enemies of *vellalars* in which he was killed. It also indicates the fight between *vellalar* and *vettuvur* in order to retain their power. The second document informs the land donation to a *devadasi*. Here, the *vellala* landholders of *sellan* clan had gone upto an extent to award her with the title '*sellan kula manikki*' (Case 14). Finally, in the third case, the *koundars* decided to sacrifice *paraiyar* women for public concern.

Cases narrated above give substantial sources to construct the social structure of this period. The narration in Cases 1 & 12 has also been mentioned in *cholapoorva pattayam*, an oral tradition. This significant incident of *vellala* migration could have happened during the later Chola period. Two things are evident from these accounts. First, the immigrants were peasants who were not aware of clan, or their (or caste) identity. Presumably, they were the disadvantaged peasant folk in the Chola Mandalam. They entered into the region on the pretext of being pilgrims. Though they had taken along with them a brahman priest, their entry into the region was not allowed by a local poet since he was not sure about their *kulam* and *gotra* (clan).⁶ With the humble request

⁶ Poet community was an important feature in Kongu society, each clan of the *vellala* supposed to have a poet, whose role was like almost that of brahmana. The poets attached with dominant landholding

of the immigrants, the poet provided them with their clan history and facilitated them to settle in 24 *nadu* of Kongu.

Secondly, before the settlement of these peasants in 24 *nadus*, there were already peasant folk with their clan and caste identity, comprising of both indigenous tribe, like *vettuva* and previous immigrants. However, soon after their settlement the peasant, who came to known as *kongu vellalar* were able to subordinate other communities and came to occupy dominant position in society. As it has been described in Case 13, these 24 *nadus* came under the control of 24 *koundars*. There were also other community leaders with *koundar* title, but the families of these 24 *kongu vellala koundars* were able to stabilize their position and promote a distinct cultural and social system, which marked the specific character of the history of medieval Kongu. The system seems to be a fusion of both indigenous and brahmanical traditions. The emergence of *kongu vellala* identity was itself a long process. First of all, they had to adjust themselves with local communities. In many instance, there were disputes between *vellala* and indigenous *vettuva* (Case 11).⁷ Similarly, there were transfers of land rights from *vettuva* and *kongu chetty* (Cases 8, 10, etc). There were land transactions within the *vellala koundars* themselves. Land rights were transferred on account of marriage (Case 11) and personal admiration of timely services and helps (Case 15).

Peasant folk of one place had to shift to another place within the region due to various reasons. For instance, in Case 8, certain clan of *kongu vellala* had to shift their settlement due to the personal clash with another clan of the same community. In the new place, they established some new villages and became landholders of those villages. Similarly, in certain cases due to draught in certain locality, they moved to other far off places and purchased land to settle in those areas. Land rights were acquired by helping the rulers. For instance, it is described in Case 14, when Nayakka ruler wanted to control the disloyal Koppanna, a *vettuva* local ruler, and the *vellala koundars* helped him and thus acquired the Koppanna's territories. In several cases, *vellala koundars* had peaceful agreement with *vettuva koundars* and *kongu chetty* and began to live together. The number of charters has been signed from the representatives of these various communities (Chart-4, No.20).

communities and provided them details about their genealogy and ancestry, which often was a mythological construction just to glorify the dominant status of the particular clan.

⁷ There was a consistent tension between these two communities from the early period. See, Ramachantra Chettiar, *Kongu Nattu Varalaru* (History of Kongu Nadu), Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1954, pp.51-54.

We are told that *koundars* of 24 Nadus brought 24 brahmans. It is also similar in case of potters (Case 2). In certain case, some alien communities were able to gain land rights and thus become landowners. Potter, *paraiyar* and barber (Cases 2, 13, 15, etc) were developed into the position of *kaniyala*. Migration and acquiring land rights were not over with the settlement of 24 *koundars*. Rather it was a continuous process throughout the history of the medieval period. Even people from other regions like *pandiyamandalam* (Case 3) migrated to the Kongu region and became landholders.

The spatial disposition of various communities had created a condition for coming together of divergent cultural people to inhabit in a closer space. There developed a necessity for interdependency as well as for rank hierarchy, which was characteristic of medieval caste system. The diluted form of brahmanical ideology and the political and economic power gained from the corporate web of dominant landowning communities, in this case of *koundars*, went together with the persistence and growing rigidity in creating the 'system'. Yet, another important aspect that explicitly comes out from the above narrations is the social space of alien castes. If some documents were to be made, it needs approval of representatives of all communities including the lower castes such as *andi*, *thotti*, *paraiyar*, etc.

4. Caste, Myths and Mobilization

The settlement of social groups together into a system created a necessity for cooperation and interdependency. But the survival of the system depended upon the social separation. The system, in the long run, delineated the role of each caste and even their behavioral rules, interactional mechanism, etc. The powerful castes always tried to retain their high status by various means. Each group was conscious about their position in the social hierarchy and utmost care was taken to preserve their socio-cultural practices. Despite this, still there was a wider space for emulation and even the shifting from one caste to another. When communities, particularly the lower ones, migrated to other places, they tended to take up a new occupation and a new caste name. Using same caste and power titles by various communities needs to be understood in this context. Particular mention can be made to the titles such as *vellala*, *mudali*, *chetty*, etc, which had been adopted by some lower rank castes as well. It was quite possible for a lower rank caste, specifically those, which did not depend much upon the dominant

landholding groups, to strengthen its socio-economic power by an organized network among them.

The ideological support of brahmanism played a significant role when a caste was able to mobilize its economic power to claim higher status in the caste hierarchy. One of the significant aspects of caste system during medieval period was that almost all castes began to construct their exaggerated history, often situating their origin in brahmanical textual mythology. Connecting its genealogy with certain mythical figures in the religious texts, a caste could become part of greater tradition distancing itself from the tribal status. In case of migrant castes, it was necessary to show their high culture and rich historical background (generally in the form of myths and exaggerated stories), in order to establish their power and to bring the indigenous community into a subordinate position. This tendency was quite popular, particularly among the castes those, who were in the middle. Therefore, the interplay of mythological history, cultural distinction, economic mobility and political power of a caste determines its position in the social hierarchy.

The region came under the domination of peasants probably after the settlement *kongu vellalars* in 24 Nadus. The migrant peasants were much accustomed to the new technology in agriculture, were able to convert major part of woodland terrain into agrarian fields. There were many instances when lands were transferred from local people, especially from *vettuvār* and *kongu chetty*. The local people were apparently backward in agricultural technology, compared to the *vellalars*.⁸ Similarly, as discussed, there was a great degree of spatial displacement of *vellala* settlements within the Kongu region (Chart-4, Nos. 5 & 6). Thus during the medieval period, with an organized caste network, the *kongu vellalar* were able to dominate the entire socioeconomic and political scenario. They quickly acquired land rights throughout the region, established their control over temples of both brahmanical and non-brahmanical, they thus became owner, rather than just patron, of the local temple.⁹ Temple in medieval period played vital role and they were always used as a means of legitimizing power of the social groups that controlled the temples. In several instances, the rights over local temples, often-folk gods, had come to the hands of *vellala* (Chart-4, No.31). It

⁸ Ibid, p.52.

⁹ For example, the copper plate of Karichikumara describes the rights of *Venduvan*, *Pannan* and *Perunkudiyān* clan over the Karichakumara Temple. The copper plate has also been analysed by Se.Raju in his *Appiyapalayam Perunkudi Kula Varalaru* (History of Appiyapalayam Perunkudi Clan), Kongu Ayvu Mayyam, Erode, 2000, p.46.

signified their domination over these regions. Though there were other communities who also possessed land rights and they were economically equal, but the *kongu vellalars*, owing to their organized network and mobility, power relations with rulers and technical skill and hard-work in cultivation, could easily gain an advanced position in the socioeconomic and political spheres.

The myths and traditions with regard to *vellalars* can be divided into two categories. The first category deals with the origin of *vellalars* in general. Traditions related to specific origin of *kongu vellalars* come under the second category. To begin with the second category, most of the traditions, in the form folk songs, drama, and a few copper plates and palm leave, documents narrate generally their migration from the *cholamandalam*, the dispute among the three kings over border issues, the help of Kampanattan, the local poet, settlement of *vellalar* in 24 *nadus* of Kongu *mandalam*, and their continuous struggle with the local people especially with the *vettuvār*. The *cholapoorva pattayam* and *poondurai puranam* also gives similar information.¹⁰ The text *annamarkadaikal* is a story about the fight between *vettuva* and *vellala* leaders.¹¹ Various clans of *kongu vellalar* caste also have their own *puranas*.¹² Some copper plates with regard to *kanna* clan have been already mentioned (Chart-4, No.19). In addition to this, various places where *kongu vellalar* had established their settlements have their own *purana*.¹³ All these indicate linkages of the *kongu vellalar* with *shiva* myths. *Poonduraipuranam* for example, gives detailed mythological history of the place Poondurai.¹⁴ It narrates how the place emerged as a spiritual centre with the grace of goddess Parvathi. This *purana* has several parts giving lot of branch stories connecting Kongu with *shaivite* traditions.

In case of *vettuvās*, it was only during the period of *konattan* chiefs (Kongu Chola), the *vettuva* adapted certain brahmanical rituals. In light of several inscriptions of the 13th century, *vettuva* chiefs appear as donors of land and other materials to brahmanical temples as well as to the brahmanas. Similarly, during the same period

¹⁰ See, *Cholapurvapattiyam*, Government Oriental Mass. Series, No.5, 1950. Se.Rasu and K.Arangasam (eds.), *Kaliyannar Pulavar Iyarriya Poondurai Puranam* (Poondurai Puranam of Kaliyannar Pulavar), Sarma Sandoriyam Press, Pudhukottai, 1990, pp.25-30.

¹¹ For the English version of the story see, *Elder Brothers' Story (on Oral Epic of Tamil)*, collected and Translated by Brenda E.F.Beck, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras, 1992.

¹² Se. Rasu, *Keeranur Kaniyalarkal Varalaru*, op.cit., pp.21-50; *Vellodu Kaniyalar Varalaru* (History of Vellodu Landholders), Vellodu, 2007.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Se.Rasu and K.Arangasami(eds), *Kaliyannar Pulavar Iyarriya Poondurai Puranam* , op.cit., 1990.

vettuva tribe could have been divided into different occupational groups and when they came into contact with caste society of other regions, they could have taken their caste name. The title *vettuva vellala*¹⁵ attests the new occupational change of *vettuva*. In course of time, when the title *vellala* emerged as a caste name of dominant landholding community, there could have been a tendency among the tribal and lower castes, which had land right, to call themselves *vellalar*. Thereby, the *vettuva vellala* might have left their *vettuva* affiliation and identified with *vellala*. During the medieval period, the *vettuva* was generally a caste practicing mainly agriculture. However, it seems that the *vettuva* agriculturalists could not make much out of their new occupation. The migrant *vellalar* who had relatively a high technical knowledge of agriculture emerged as a powerful landholding community and the *vettuva* gradually reduced into a subordinate position both in political and economic terms. The land-transaction from *vettuva* to *vellala* can be seen connecting with the vanishing power of *vettuva*. In several cases, the territories of *vettuva* were captured by the *vellala* chiefs (Chart-4, No.16). In all available documents, it is apparent that there was a persistent tension between these two communities in both sharing land rights and political power. Like the *kongu vellalar*, the *vettuv* chiefs also bore the power titles such *koundar*, *kadavarayan*, *manrاديار*, *pallavarayar*, *vanthirayan*, *kangeyan*, *nayakkar*, *mutharaiyan*, *kaduvetti*, *rayar*, *kongurayar*, *urkoundar*, *gangathirayan*, *pillai*, etc. When the supporting of the brahmans and initiating temple construction were considered as a means for power legitimization, *vettuva* leaders, as it has been referred in various inscriptions, also began to take-up temple building.¹⁶ It probably marked the *vettuva*'s adaptation or assimilation to brahmanical ideology and the *vettuva* tribe entered into a caste social system.

Since the *vettuv*s were well known for their bravery from the classical period, generally their political power was based on their military capability. A territory to *vattuva* had several purposes in different historical point of time. During the early period it was just spatial division for hunting, territory served as place for herding and primitive agriculture during the early medieval period, it was with the beginning of medieval age that territory became more than an administrative unit of the state, it a was place for habitation of divergent occupational groups, the dominant being the agriculturalists. From the perspectives of *vettuva* it was a crucial stage because in first two stages the

¹⁵ Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, Vol. 7, Chennai, p. 394.

¹⁶ V.Ramamurthi, *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal*, op.cit., p. 326.

vettuva were powerful in terms of economy and polity. But the rapid changes in the nature of production during the third stage the economic base of the *vettuva* consistently deteriorated.¹⁷ Though *vettuva* gradually shifted to agriculture, they were trailing in technical skill in comparison to the fast intruding *vellala* folks. Similarly, the *vettuva* also lacked in kinship organizational network, while it was an important aspect for the success of *vellalars*. Therefore, soon the *vettuva* chiefs were reduced to the position of military leaders or representatives of some ruling dynasties, and their kinsmen to either small-scale agriculturalists or some low-profile occupations. In Cases 8, 9 and 12 in the previous section, references were drawn with regard to the struggle between the *vettuva* and the *vellala* to retain their power in Kongu. Here, one more example can be given.

Case-16: When Kanagapurathu Lingyan, son of Nanjayan, went to Erode with intension to find a suitable place to build a dam, he was objected by a Vella Vettuvan saying that the place comes under his administrative control. It instigated a prolonged fight. Lingyan was given full support and military help by other *koundars* and he tried to get the help of rulers from the Pandiya dynasty. The fight went on for months. At last, the dispute came to an end with the defeat of Vella Vettuvan by Kaliyannan, who came for the support of Lingyan (Chart-4, No.16)

The *purana* of *vettuvar* caste connects Lord Shiva, Cera rulers, Kongu Mandalam and the *vettuva* tribe. Two social documents in Copper Plate in our collection begin with the story about the origin *vettuvar* (Chart-4, No.19). More or less the same story has been given in *kongumandala varalaru*. The story narrates how Thinnan, who belonged to *vettuva* community, was embraced by Lord Shiva and subsequently came to be known as Kannappanayanar.

In Kongu, the *Kaikolars* had close connection especially with the *vellala koundars*. Several documents dealing with local affairs have *sengunthar* representatives either as witness or signatories. Therefore, we can presume a good number of *sengunthar* populations in Kongu. A peculiar tradition among the *vellalar* community of Kongu deserves to be mentioned here. Most of the *vellalar* clans had their own *pulavar* (poet). A number of social documents deal with the appointment of *pulavar* by *vellala koundars*. Understandably, the task of the *pulavar* was to compose songs about the history of the *vellalar*, conduct their rituals, and keep all the documents related to the

¹⁷ B. Rajanna, *Salem Encyclopedia -A Cultural and Historical Dictionary of Salem District, Tamilnadu*, Institute of Kongu Studies, Salem, 1992, p. 344.

particular clan. If either copper plates or palm leaves were inscribed, they were kept with the *pulavars*. In a sense, the *pulavar* have acted as a brahman to *vellalar* of Kongu. In their marriage rituals, the *pulavar* had important role. On wedding day, he should visit the groom's house and sing the song glorifying their community.¹⁸ The marriage rituals would end only after feeding milk to the *pulavar*.

Case.17: The Kongu *vellalars* requested the Vijayanagara King to issue a charter about the appointment of *pulavar* for their community. Referring to old documents, the king told the *vellalars* that the descendants of Kampar were their poets. During the time of the three kings, Kulotunka Cholan ordered Kampar to sing a song on him. When Kampar refused to do so, the King asked him to sing a song on the river Ponni. To this request, Kampan said the river was nothing but spittle of Kongu *vellalar*. With anger, the king took the *pulavar* to the bank of Ponni and asked him to show the spit. Now Kampar composed a song on Ganga Parameswari seeking her help. In order to teach a lesson to the king, Ganga Parameswari began to overflow. The frightened King requested Kampar to sing a song so as to pacify Ganga Parameswari. Ganga calmed down when Kampar composed another song on her. Admiring the power of Kampar, the king declared that he could give anything that Kampar wanted. Kamapar requested to confer the *vaduvai* tax, which was paid by the *vellala* to the Chola state. A charter was issued in this regard with the signature of the Chola King. Kampar brought this charter to the *vellalar* and on their request he composed seventy *per kavithaikal* (plough songs) and sixteen *mangala padal* (auspicious poems to be recited at the time of wedding). The *vellalars* accepted the leadership of Kampar and gave him the *adimai sasana pattayam* (charter for being servant or slave).

During this time, the Chola King again approached Kampar with a request of a song on him. Kampar denied saying that he could compose song not other than the Kongu *vellalar*. Consequently he was killed by the annoyed King. The ancestors of Nanjarayapulavan of *sengunthar gotram* of *pogan* clan and Thirukaivel *pulavan* of *rasi* clan were brought to Kongumandalam along *vellalar* by the Chola king. The king gave them kani land in 24 nadus. Thereafter, the *pulavars* of *sengunthar gotram* singing *mangala vazhthu* on the day of wedding in *vellala* family. On heeding this story, the Nayakkar king appointed Nansaraya and Thirukavel as *pulavar* of *vellala* community. And also made arrangements therefore the *rasapadi pal varthinai* tax to go to the *pulavars*. In returns the *pulavars* should sing *kampars vali* and *mangalvazhthu*. Consequently 24 persons from *sengunthar* community were appointed as *pulavars* of 24 nadus. Koundars of 24 nadus have signed this document (Chart-4, No.9).

In light of above charter, we can ascertain at least three things. First, the close connection between *sengunthar* and *kongu vellalar* community is very clear. There are several other documents (Chart-4, Nos. 13, 14, etc), they register similar story of

¹⁸ The details about the attachment of Pulavar with Kongu Vellalar can be found in Se. Rasu, *Appiyapalayam Perunkudi Kula Varalaru*, op.cit., pp.74-75.

appointment of *pulavar* by the *vellalar*. Secondly, there is high possibility that *sengunthar* might have migrated during the time of Cholas. Finally, by connecting their story with Kampar, Shiva and the Chola, the *sengunthar* had tried to claim their equal position or little higher position than the *vellalar* in social hierarchy. According to the *purana* of *vellalar*, Kampar is a respectable person who stopped them while entering into the Kongumandalam. Then on their request, he divided them according to their *kula* and *kotra* identity. Finally, with the help of Kampar the *vellalar* settled in 24 nadus of Kongu. Therefore, by claiming as descendent of Kampar, the *sengunthar* were able to claim their high status. But in Kongu, due to their marginal population and economic development, they were always dominated by the landowning *vellala koundars*. The following case while attesting the relationship between the *vellala* and the *sengunthar*, it clearly indicates the lower position of the latter.

Case-18. Kangeyar of *kanna* clan of Kongu *vellalar* was ruler of Yezhukkari Nadu. With him, there lived a Nallayan allies Petty Karana Kangeyan who belonged to the *sengunthar* community of *idangai* division. Since Kangeya did not have child for long, Nallayan prayed for a child to his chief and offered his head to the god. Admiring the heroic act of Nallayan, Kangeyar, the chief Yezhukkari Nadu, made several rights to the descendant of Nallyarn. Thereby they were allowed to have their community meeting in the temple premises (Charter-4, No.40)

Nevertheless, it seems that the *kaikolar* or *sengunthar* were not completely integrated into the peasant oriented caste integration. Since they were non-landowning group, it is presumed that they were much closer to the traders than the peasants. But there is great degree of regional variation in the caste relationship of *sengunthar* with others.¹⁹

Among the five artisan castes of Kammalar, the *thattan*, *thachan* and *kollan* appear frequently in social document of Kongu. In above discussed Case-14 shows the deed with regard to awarding the title *sellan kula manikki* to a devadasi. The charter has been signed by the representatives of different communities including Mudali Thachan and Verrivel Kollan (Chart-4, No.13). Ganpathi Tattan of *thattar* community was one among the witnesses for the land transaction between *vettuvvars* and *vellalars*. The other witnesses were *koundars*, *vettuvvars*, *brahmans*, *andi* and *paraiyars* (Chart-4, No. 10). In another similar instance, Choliya Koundar transferred his land rights over certain

¹⁹ Mattison Mines, 'Models of Caste and the Left-Hand Division in South India', *American Ethnologist*, vol.9, No.3, 1982, p.468.

villages to three *vellala koundars* of *panankadai* clan, three *panjalars* (another name for *kammalar*) community such as *kannan*, *kollar* and *thachan* have been included in the list of witnesses (Chart-4, No.3). These examples show the integration of the castes belonging to the *kammalar* group into the village settlement. After describing the story about the origin of the *kammalar* with the grace of Shiva and Parvathi, a charter describes a dispute between *visvakarmas* of 24 nadus belonging to left hand division and *valangai chetty* (Chart-4, No.44).

The multiplication of castes and consequent tension in society is vividly expressed in the above copper plate. As mentioned somewhere, each caste had certain rights and social privileges according to their socio-economic and political power. Such rights need to be protected. The appearance of the numerous social documents itself shows the social mobility and existing tension among the caste groups. Special rights and privileges were inscribed and kept in different places. As seen in the previous chapter, copies of an inscription announcing the special social rights of *kammalar* have been collected from three different places (Chart-4, No.28). These rights are generally obtained from rulers or powerful caste groups within a locality. Conferring social privileges depend upon the existing demands for the role of certain social groups. When the *vellala koundar* were in the dire need of pots, they had to bring *vetkovars* from Pandiya region and share with them their social rights (Case, 3). Thus, the immigrant *vetkovars* were able to enjoy a half of the privileges, which hitherto was enjoyed by the *vellala* caste. Similarly, with the spread of large-scale temple constructions, the demand for artisans groups especially the five castes of *kammalar* also increased. As a result, the *kammalar* were able to enhance their social position. For the sustainability of social privileges and rights, depend upon the recognition by other caste people. Therefore, the rights are to be demonstrated repeatedly in public space to test the public recognition. Special occasions, such as wedding, temple festivals, funeral, etc., provided opportunities for such demonstrations (Chart-4, No.44). If a particular right of a caste is opposed, that indicates the socio-economic development of other castes. Thus, castes were always engaged in dispute with other rival castes.

The dominant caste necessarily should have rich myths and traditions. They extend ideological support for its dominance. The myths of various castes, in fact, represent the real picture of their interrelation with other castes and their hierarchical position. Cultural practices and social rights of the migrant castes should be interpreted

in the context of indigenous experience. Especially, it should be relevant to the ideology or mythical traditions of the dominant caste. Mythology of particular caste, therefore, needs to be constructed with response to the mythology of other castes in the particular special context. For example, most of the traditions about the origin of alien castes such as *kaikolar* and *vetkovar* in Kongu, were connected with the traditions of the *kongu vellalar* (Chart-4, No.33). Mythology of *kongu vellala*, on the other hand, justifies their dominance over 'immoral' *vettuvvars*.²⁰ The story about the support of the Chola king to *vellala* and the consequent acceptance of other contemporary rulers belonging to different dynasties is another way of legitimization. In turn, the tradition of *vettuva* competes with the *vellala* showing their birth with the grace of Lord Shiva. In their case, Cera rulers invited them to settle in the Kongu region.²¹

5. Inter-Caste Relations and Hierarchy

A discussion on the nature of interdependency among the castes and the degree of their independence may provide a better understanding about the inter-caste relations and the possible caste hierarchy. In the context of Kongu, the *kongu vellala koundars* were dominant in terms economic and political power as well as in terms of numerical strength. Therefore, the relationship of the *kongu vellala koundar* with other castes will enable us to perceive the contemporary caste structure and its integration.

The picture of village communities and their traditions and beliefs that emerge out from the discussion in the previous sections contradicts with the inscription-based studies. The structure of society inferred from the local social documents helps us to presume the degree to which the brahmanical ideology was adopted or practiced by the local social groups. Like that in the inscriptions, the temple played crucial role in the integration of village communities. But, most of the temples were non- brahmanical. Acquiring the rights over the local temples was considered as essential for the dominant landowning castes. It symbolized their power within the locality.

In a metaphorical sense, these local temples acted like a state. It exercised its ritual jurisdiction over certain spatial unit under the control of non-Brahmin warrior, equivalent to *kshatriya* category. The subjects within its territory had certain obligations,

²⁰ Se.Rasu and K.Arangasami(eds), *Kaliyannar Pulavar Iyarriya Poondurai Puranam* (Poondurai Puranam of Kaliyannar Pulavar), Sarma Sandoriyam Press, Pudhukottai, 1990, pxxiv.

²¹ Ibid.

which they necessarily had to exercise, therefore to be part of the existing 'state' system. The obligations can either be in manual services or tax tribute. Each community within the 'state's' territorial power had certain prescribed task and fixed tax payment to the 'state'. The labour task, which often included even sacrificing the life for the welfare of the entire society, as cited in Case 17, is high in the communities which lay in the bottom of caste hierarchy and it gradually decreases in ascending order from the bottom. In case of monetary payment for the functioning of the state (daily *pujas* and prescribed festivals), there was a reversed structure, the communities in the top order paid higher than those at the bottom (Chart-4, No.31). Now, in the entire structure, the role of the brahmans as well as some non-brahman priest, can be excluded and treated as a separate category. The sacredness of the brahman would have held high value among the rural folk. For example, whenever the social documents were made it always ended with a threatening statement that 'if anybody goes against the decision inscribed in the document they will suffer as much as the crime of killing brahmana' (Chart-4, No.23). The documents which expected sincere and compulsory obedience of the people, cautioned them for the evil impacts equivalent to killing of thousands brahmans in case of their non acceptance. Special mention can also be made to the inscriptional records of early medieval period. Most of these records deal with various land donations either to the temple or the brahman. It was the period when the ideology of brahmanism gradually influenced the local chiefs. Now, if the documents were carved, the matter usually ended up with the cautioning statement that if somebody thinks against the deed they would invite evil suffering as much as by killing a cow (number of cows varies from one to another document) on the bank of Ganga (*gangaikaraiyil karampasuvai konra pavam*). The important aspect is that the maintenance of the social order and hierarchy was not possible merely with coercive elements, whereas it always required some ideology of sacredness. Unlike the records of the early medieval period, which primarily dealt with local chiefs, the social documents of the medieval period were generally agreements among non-brahmans communities, where brahmanical ideology were effectively (with local modification) used by the dominant landholders without necessary direct presence of the brahmans. Despite the appearance of brahmanical ideology in this land based caste structure, brahmans exercised less control or power than the land owning non-brahman castes. Therefore, the socio-economic facts and numerical strength of a particular caste determine the caste hierarchy.

As discussed in the previous section, despite interactions between some castes, they maintained their own independence. But at the same time, a few castes that had dependant relationship with the dominant land based caste lacked independent operation. At the local level, the brahmans seemed to have certain degree of dependency upon the powerful landholder, while they are independent in their social and cultural sphere. As stated, the brahmanical settlements and institutions were relatively less in northern Tamil Nadu, whereas, there were numerous local cults with non-brahman priest, with a mixer of both brahmanical and non- brahmanical rituals. The brahman priest, *iyer* appears in several local records along with other communities. Here, the treatment of *iyer* indicates that they were considered as just one among the other communities and are given the task of being temple priest. Both *iyer* and *andi* have been represented in same documents as *Perumal kovil pujai pannum iyer* (*iyer*, who performs *puja* in temple) and *pathirakkali kovil pujai pannum kovanandikalil muthandi* (*andi*, who performs *puja* in Pathirakkali temple) (Chart-4, No.16). The order of signatories in the social documents gives some clues about the importance and place of each caste in the social system (see table No.1). In the signatories' lists, *iyer* appears after land-owning and artisan castes. Since *iyer* and *andi* were in charge of rituals in brahmanical and non-brahmanical temples respectively, their acceptance has been sought. In one instance, when *kongu chetty* sold his land to Soliyappa Koundan, a *shiva brahmana*, Subbiah Gurukkal by name, have signed in the document. In that, the buyer was entitled to have authority over Shiva temple, Pechiyamman Temple, Soliyamman Temple, Pillaiyar Temple, Devadanam, Brahmadeyam, etc (Case 11). Shaiva brahmans have been mentioned in some other documents as rulers along with *kongu chetty* (Chart-4, Nos. 8, 9, etc). Probably, the early land holding brahmans could have transferred their land rights to *vellala* during the 16th century.²² Similarly, when Senkoda Koundar married off her daughter to Kumara Velappa Kounder of *anthai* clan of *vellala* caste, he transferred 4900 *vallam* lands as dowry for his daughter. Of this, 900 *vallam*, land was given to Sivan temple, Narayana Perumal, Pirattiyamman, Vinayakar and Cennimalai Andavan temple's *devadana* and *brahmadeya*. The witness of these documents includes Velayyan, *Thanikan* of Sivan Temple, Ramaswamy, *Thanikan* of Perumal Temple, Pazhaniyandi, *Thanikan* of Pirattiyamman Temple, etc (Chart-4, No. 8). Here, *vellala* landowner had supported the *devadana* and *brahmadeya* and the word *thanikan*

²²It has been also detailed in *Poondurian Puranam*. Se.Rasu and K.Arangasami(eds.), *Kaliyannar Pulavar Iyarriya Poondurai Puranam*, op.cit., pxxiv.

(equivalent to priest) had been used to mean both brahman and non-brahman (the *andi*) (Chart-4, No. 3).

Table 1: References of caste representatives in social documents:

No	Issue	Signatories/ Witnesses
1	Settlement of <i>Kongu Vellalars</i> at 24 nadus of Kongu Mandalam	Masakkali Manradiyar, Palai Vellammai Palayappattu Vaisali Kottirathil Vira Vikram Chozhi Anda Koundan, Puluvaril Ariyapiratti Villavaraya Koundan, Nalapathi Thiyakaraja Perumal Avinasi Akasarayar.
2.	Transfer of land rights from Chozhiyak Koundar (<i>pala vellalar</i>) to three other Koundars (<i>Kongu Vellalar</i>)	Koundars belonged to Othala clan, Anthai clan, Maniyan clan, Sathanthai clan, one Iyer, two Kshatriyar, Pandaram, seven Chetty, two Muslims, two Kampalattar, one Devangu Chetty, two Vellalan Chetty, two Sengunthar Nattanmaikaran, five Karanekar, one Kollan, one Poomathachan, two Pulavan, three Uppiliyan, two Andi, five Musician, two concubines, five Mannudaiyar
3.	Transfer of Rights over three villages from Kasilinga Chetty to Chozhiyak Koundar	Muthanna Koundar of Kadai Clan, Krishnaraya Koundar of Sathanthai clan, Saravana Kangeya Manradiyar of Porulantha Clan, Chithmpara Pallavarayar Koundar of Senkannar clan, Ragunatha Koundar, Kariyamanikka Koundar, Thambirattiya Koundar of Enjan clan, Senthevan Koundar of Sivanthi clan, Sethiraya Pulavan of Pokkan clan of Sengunthar. Visuvanathayyan (temple priest), Kovunandi and Muthandi (priest of Pathirakkali temple), Periyar Kuyavan (potter), Thirunavithan (Barber), and Pachan and Murugan (Scavengers?)
4	Transfer of rights over village and temple from Velayutham Chetty and Poovani Chetty to two <i>kongu vellala koundars</i>	Koundars of 24 nadu, Varnavasi Koundan, Pattakkara Manradiyar of Kangeya Nadu, Pattakkaran of Kuruppanadu Nagappa Koundar, Sridevi Koundan of Semban clan, Kaliyappa Koundar of enjan clan, Cennimalai Koundan of Methiya clan, Thambiratti Koundan of Enjan clan, Suppa Iyer, Pazhani Andi, Pazhani Thotti
5	Transfer of rights over a village from <i>Kongu Chetty</i> to <i>Kongu Vellala Koundar</i>	Pazhani Koundan of Payiran clan, Karuppu Koundan of Sathanthai clan, Thambiratti Koundan of Enjan clan, Velayyan, Ramasamy, Pazhani Andi(temple thanikars), Karuppa Thotti, Senma Paraiyan.
6.	Land transfer between to two <i>vellala Koundars</i>	Kangeya Manradiyar, Sarkarai Koundan, Pallavarakoundar, Thambiratti Koundan, Senni Andi, Semba Thotti
7.	Transfer of land and temple rights to a <i>Vellala Koundar</i>	Kangeya Manradiyar, Madurai Thirumalai Nayakkar, Muthu Koundan, Pavazhatha Koundan, Vattamalai Koundan, Vadamalai Koundan, Kuthaya Koundan, Machamalai Ramayar (Brahmana), Pacha Koundan, Muthya Koundan, Kasilingayan, Rengayyar (Brahmana), Pudarappa Koundan, Maniyam Nalli Koundan, Kailasa Pillai Vedanda Pandithar, Pootharandi, Ramachetty Koundan, Velayutha Koundan, Nattarasu Koundan, Sevanthi Koundan, Pazhani Koundan, Pachai Linka Koundan of Vettuva community, Nettairasa Koundan of Pullan caste, Kanakka Pillai, Kumarath thattan, Karichi Vettai Nayakkan of Uppilya community.
8	Transfer of right over villages first from <i>vettuva</i> to <i>vellala</i> , and then <i>vellala</i> to <i>mooppan</i>	Koundars of 24 Nadus
9	Appointment of <i>pulavar</i> (poet)	Muthanna Koundan of Kadai clan, Venaduvudaiyar of Periyar clan, Saravana Kangeya Koundar of Porulantha clan, Sarkarai Manradiyar of Payiran clan, Chidampara Pallavarayarkal of Senkanna clan, Raghunatha Koundar of Othala clan, Velappa Koundar, Thambirattiya Koundar of Enjan clan and Senthevan Koundar of Sivanthi clan
10	Appointment of <i>pulavar</i>	Kangeya Manradiyar, Palayakottai Sarkarai Manradiyar, Kodumudi Pandithar, Chinnathampi Koundar of Athi clan, Kuppanna Koundar, Vellai Koundar, Sellappa Koundar, Keerai Koundar of Kadai Clan,

		Rasa Koundar and Sellappa Koundar of Anthuva Clan, Karumana Koundar, Sellaya Koundar of Vilaya Clan, Sivanmalai Koundar of Deventhira Clan
11.	Appointment of <i>pulavar</i>	Kettymuthu Koundar, Linkaya Koundar, Venkitaraya Koundar, Choliya Koundar, Periyasami Koundar, Nallanna Koundar, Sellappa Koundar, Muthuvelappa Koundar
12	Appointment of separate <i>pulavar</i> for <i>Kongu Vellalar</i>	227 koundars from 34 villages All Thenthisai Vellalar of Kuruppu Nadu
13	Awarding the title of 'sellan kula manikki' to a temple girl	19 Vellala Koundars, 7 Vettuvass, one Nambiyar, 2 temple's Iyer, two temple's Andi, one Uppiliyan, one Mudali Thachan, one Kollan, one Kounda Moopan, five Thotti
14	Self-immolation of servants and relatives of Muthusami Koundar, chief of <i>kanna</i> clan of <i>Kongu vellalar</i> .	Kangeya Manradiyars and 57 Koundars
15	Transfer of land, administrative rights, temple right and other privileges from <i>vettuva</i> to <i>vellala</i>	Mulai Vettuvan Velappa Koundan, Kunnadi Vettuvan Rasa Koundan, Santhapadai Vettuvan Vandiya Koundan, Kalathi Koundan, Porakkila Koundan, Poovanivettuvan Sesuvarayan, Sammntharayan, Kurai Kaliyappa Koundan, Maniya Vettuvan, Iyer, Pandaram, Thattan, Navithan, Paraiyan
16	Settlement of land between <i>vettuva</i> Kaliyappa Koundan and velappakkoundan	Iyer, Andi, Thattar, Navithar, Paraiyan
17	Land transfer	Koundars of Thennilai, Vettuvan Kasiyappan, Mottai Koundan, Uttamalinka Koundan, Minnain Vettuvan Allali Koundan, Achutha Pilla Iyer, Andi, Thattan, Paraiyan
18	Dispute over a person's caste identity	Samaya Mudali pattakkarar of 24 Nadus, Pattakkarar of Ponkulukkinadu, Pattakkarar of Varakka Nadu, Pattakkarar of Arai Nadu (all belonged to Mudali community), Pazhani Koundar, Karuppana Koundar, Sellappa Koundar, Muthu Koundar

The relationship between the *vellala koundar* and *vettuva koundar* has been already discussed substantially. *Vettuva* were the real rival caste for the *vellala*. Being indigenous people, there was large-scale transaction of land rights from *vettuva* to *vellala* (Chart-4, No.13). Though there were several instances of fights between these two castes, the *vellala* gradually gained dominant position brining the *vettuva* into a subordinate status. The increasing numerical strength of *vellala* population and the support of rulers favoured the *velallas* domination. In course of time, the *vettuva* could have accepted the power of the *vellala* and existed within the *vellala* based caste integration. In documents, the *vettuvavar* names come after the *vellala koundar*. However, in certain places where *vettuvavar* population was high, the *vettuvavar* would have held dominant political power than the *vellala*.

The non-land owning castes such as *chetty*, five castes of *kammalar*, *kaikolars*, etc., are equally independent from the land owning castes. But they had to operate within the political authority of the dominant landholding caste leaders. The relation between the *chetty* and the *vellalar* is not clear. Most of the *chetty* were from the *vellalar* caste and some others were presumably migrant from other regions. Some sections of *chetty* would have been part of village settlement since they appeared as signatories in the social documents. *Kongu chetty* were early *chetty* caste in Kongu, they were also landowners. *chetty* caste is generally presumed as it belonged to left-hand division. But in a copper plate from Kongu, they are said to have belonged to right hand division (Chart-4, No. 44). Most of the land based castes come under this category. Some documents in Kongu inform the land transactions of *chetty* with the *vellalar* (Chart-4, No.4).

The relationship between *kammalar* and the *vellala* can be inferred from the aforesaid (Case-21). Here, the dispute between *valangai chetty* and *idangai kammalar* had been settled by a Koppanna Koundar belonged to *vellalar* caste. According to the situation, the place of *kammalar* in the signatories order varies. Compared to *kammalar* castes, the *sengunthar* or *kaikolar* are more attached to the *vellalar* in Kongu. *Pulavar* (poets) were appointed from *sengunthar* caste by the *vellalar* clan. Like in the case of *vettuvār*, *sengunthar* would have held political power in certain areas where their population was high. *Sengunthar* used *mudali* and there is a reference to 24 *pattakkarar* of 24 *nadus* of Kongu who belonged to *sengunthar Mudaliyar* caste.

Case-20. Samaya Mudali Pattakkarar of 24 Nadus, *Pattakkarar* of Vaiyapuri Nadu, Ponkulukki Nadu, Varakka Nadu, Arai Nadu, all belonged to Mudaliyar caste, and Pazhani Koundar, Muthukoundar, Karuppanna Koundar and Sellappa Koundar wrote this charter to *Nattar*, *Urar*, *Samukattharm Koundar*, *Nattanmaikarar*, *Periyathanakkarar*, *Pullikkarar*, *Kariyakkarar* and their relatives of nearly 75 villages. There was a case trailed on a dispute whether one Karuppa Muthali of Lingapur belonged to *mudaliyar* caste. Chinnappa Mudali, a Priyathankkaran of Rakkapalayam and Marappan mudali, supported the claim of Karuppanna Mudali of Lingapur saying that he was their relative. When Swami, the spiritual leader of *mudali* community, visited this place, the case was taken to him. The guru accepted the claim of Karuppanna Mudali of Lingapur after hearing the case. Some Mudali of four villages, who had not satisfied with the judgment, went for an appeal to the same guru and got received another judgment for out-casting Karuppanna Mudali. By this charter, the *koundar* and *senguntha mudaliyar* declared that the second judgment of swami was invalid (charter-4, No.39)

In most cases, *andi* and *pandaram* (temple priests) and *pulavar* (poet) served the role of brahman to the local communities. *Andi* and *pandaram* were completely dependent of landholding *vellalar*. They are supposed to perform *puja* in local non-brahmanical temples and take care of day-to-day function of the temples. *Pulavar* was in charge of conducting marriage rituals for local *vellalar* communities. Sometime, *pulavar* acted like a spokesman of the *vellala* community. He retained the responsibility of maintaining records about history, ancestry, cultural practices, rituals, etc., of the clans/castes with which he was affiliated. Each clan of *kongu vellalar koundar* had appointed *pulavar* who are in most cases belonged to the *sengunthar* community. The role of *pulavar*, *andi* and *pandaram* in society seems to be significant since they appeared in most of the social documents either as signatories or witnesses (see table-1). Like *andi*, *pandaram* and *pulavar* in case of *kongu vellalars*, in other castes such as *kusavar*, *sengunthar mudaliyar*, etc., also had general non-Brahmin spiritual leaders.²³ The kinsmen in several occasions had taken oath of surrendering his soul, body, and property (*udal*, *uire*, and *udamai*) to the priest, often mentioned as *madathipathi*, or *kula guru*. Generally, the *kula gurus* were appointed from other caste (Chart-4, No. 39).

Among the other dependent castes, the *navithan*, *vannan*, *kuyavan* or *vetkovar*, etc are significant. There are several folk traditions about their relationship with the landholding *vellala*. In one instance, a *navithan*, lost his life when he fought with *vettuvur* in the support of *vellalar* (Case 13). Similarly, another *navithan* helped his *vellala* master who belonged to *kanna* clan to recapture their territory (Chart-4, No.19). Being one among the artisan groups the *vetkovar* in Kongu had operated as a corporate (Chart-4, Nos. 33, 34, etc), mobilizing their kinsmen from different regions. They had negotiated with *vellalar* about their wages before they settle in Kongu and acquired a half of their social rights. They were given a new name as *tirunelakandar* (one of the names of lord Shiva and one among the 63 Nayanmars). It signifies their socioeconomic development during the medieval period. In one instance, all *vetkovars* belonging to 24 *nadus* of Kongu had gathered together to decide upon establishing a *madam* for the purpose of some charity work (Chart-4, No. 44). *Vetkovars* have their own copper plate declaring their migration and social rights in Kongu. But their representation in other documents that deal with public concern seems to be very less. Names of some

²³ Se.Rasu, *Murnkath Thozhuvu Periyakula Varalaru* (History of Murnkath Thozhuvu Periyakulam), Erode, 1989, pp.144-48.

kusalavar (also potter) appear once as witness (Chart-4, No. 25), except this, no other document has included the names of their representatives. Similarly, *navithan* (barber) and *vannan* (washer man) do not figure as either signatories or witnessed, even though they were very much part of the land based caste system.

Paraiyar and *thotti* are only castes whose inclusion in the social documents had been considered essential. These two stayed at the bottom of social hierarchy but had widest representation as witness than any other dependant castes of those days. Their services would have been important for the existence of landholding caste. But their complete dependency upon the landholders disabled their socio-economic mobility. Thus, they were not able to function like corporate or union, mobilizing their kinsmen in order to negotiate with the other castes. Being landless labour and not specialized with any particular demanding craft, the immediate question probably to them was just survival. Their frequent appearance in the social documents should not be mistaken with their power or their role in decision-making. But it was probably to ensure their cooperation and service in the new context that reached through the charter. In Case 3, the document records the grant of land to a *paraiyar*. It is a classical example for the unprivileged position of *paraiya* within a peasant society. When *vellala koundars* decided to offer human sacrifice to the local deity, one *paraiya* escaped from village after hearing the brutal decision beforehand. When they approached another *paraiya* of their village, he obeyed the decision but became ready to put his wife in-to the prey. According to the copper plate, the *paraiya* woman was not killed even after the temple cart ran over her. Exclaimed Koundars offered some gifts. But the *paraiya* told them 'Lord! Show some way for our survival' (*yenga cheevanathukku yethavathu vazhi ceyyunka sami*). On this, the *koundars* granted him lands. The *chakkiliar* were more disadvantaged than the *paraiyars*. The following case explains how *chakkiliar* were treated as slaves.

Case-21: Thotti Chakkiliar, Madurai Chakiliar, Anuppu Chakiliar, and Kanakkattu Chakiliar approached Kammpala Koundar when they were beaten by Athinthan, a *athikari* (officer) for not paying tax. After discussing with other *nattuk koundars* of the region, Kammpala convey's his inability to help them out. Then Chakiliar took this complaint to Onnappa Koundar. After listening their plea, Onnappak wrote to all *nattu koundars* inviting them for a meeting to discuss this issue. But Koundars wrote back mentioning that they could not do anything on this and they required these sakkiliar castes no longer. Then, Onnappa took the *chakkiliar* to Kappini Nanchayyan, a government officer, who levied this tax and explained him that these *chakkiliar* never had to pay this tax.

Refusing this request, Nachayyan put the *chakkiliar* in jail and directed Onnappa to get permission from higher officials, *smugam*. He ordered that they could be released if the Koundars of their *nadu* pay tax dues. Since the Koundars of their *nadu* refused to take them, the *chakkiliars* assured Onnappak that they would be slave of Onnappak and pay certain tax to him, and pleaded again for his help. Onnappak paid the tax dues, took the *chakkiliar* to the higher authority, explained their case to them, and got permission to relieve from this oppressive tax (Chart-4, No.49).

Explicitly, the position of the lower castes was not secure because there was little hope for their employment in the existing system. With the complete absence of resistance, they accepted their position and thus prone to be exploited by the castes with superior economic and political power.

Presumably, brahmanical ideology could have allowed brahmans to have minimum interaction with the lower caste people. With the support and patronage of landholding and trading communities, the brahmans were able to retain their purity and sacredness. The aloofness of brahmans from the lower section of the society was advantageous to the dominant landholding castes. Unlike the brahmana, they cannot avoid the interaction with the lower caste since their cooperation was necessary for the existence of upper castes. At the same time, they were needed to maintain the social hierarchy. It was in this context, their closeness to the brahman and brahmans aloofness with the lower castes became advantageous to the dominant non-brahman caste. Given this context, the *Kongu vellala koundar* were able to exercise enormous power.

6. Caste and Power Titles

Caste and power titles are one useful category that provides an analytical insight to study the political, economic and ritual status of a caste. The confusions engulfs when various caste groups irrespective of their hierarchical positions use same caste titles. Such emblems are not, in all cases, signifier of single identity. The use of the same title by divergent castes does need a derivation of contextual meaning rather than treating them as single category. A title may appear, as pointer of the particular caste's economic status or political power, or ritual/sacred authority or in most cases none of them. For instance, in certain context caste titles are simply a 'pretentious labels' acquired by ritually low ranking castes in their efforts towards upward mobility.²⁴

²⁴ J. Pandian, 'Political Emblems of Caste Identity: An Interpretation of Tamil Caste Titles', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol.56, no.4, 1983, p.192.

Certain caste titles had initially been used by the leaders to denote their political power and ritual authority, distinct from the kinsman of his own community, but in course of time it was adapted by other members as well, thus the title lost its initial signification and reduced to simply a caste name of particular kin group. It is also imperative to draw the spatial limitations of caste titles. If a title is a connotative of political power, it is not necessary that in all cases the title carries an equal degree of power, rather it may vary at different levels, but denotes the political dominance and power within the level. Examples can be cited from early medieval state system where same political titles were used by the king at the top, intermediary chiefs at the middle and even local village chiefs at the bottom. Categorizing the titles into ritual and political categories is indeed a difficult task. In fact, the underlying structure exhibits the interplay of the both. Quoting J. Pandian's argument seems appropriate here, 'the political and ritual aspects exist in a dialectical relationship, both are necessary for an individual to conceptualize his caste identity. In some instances the two are in close interplay, as when a single term serves as both caste name and title and this acts as both a political and a ritual emblem, in other instances the interplay is limited as when some caste groups self-consciously distinguish their caste names and caste titles.'²⁵

Medieval Kongu witnessed multiplicity of power titles as that of caste itself. Most of the titles seem to be signifying the political and economic power rather than sacred authority. However, as discussed, political authority always had interconnection with the other aspects including religious and rituals. In the light of several cases cited in the previous sections, the economic, political, and religious aspects seem to have equal value in a title. In fact, the political authority cannot always be legitimized through military power or economic strength, rather the ritual ownership have been effectively used in several case as means to peaceful legitimization of exploitation. Therefore, temple ownership is as much important as ownership over land.

In addition to political and ritual categories, yet another category on which a title can have its root is occupation. Though the origin of caste is more to owe the occupational specialization, though it was desired social groups should adhere to their original occupation, it was not in all cases the restriction was strictly followed. Giving up the traditional occupation and adopting a new one was quite possible as the castes tried to emulate other castes specifically those that were in the top of the middle order.

²⁵ Ibid, p.194.

In fact, castes had to be more conscious in order to avoid emulation of lower castes. But it proved impossible when a place is in dire need for immigration of various occupational groups. Commonly, most immigration took place in order to avoid the inconvenient economic and social situations in the native place (traders needs to be treated an exceptional case). In the context, the use of titles such as *vellalan* and *chetty* will be discussed later. In the following pages, some titles, which have consistent references in the contemporary sources are to be analyzed. They can be classified into at least two categories. First, the titles were mainly used as indicative of political power and they had interplay with the ritual authority. Secondly, the occupational titles were adopted with the effect of converting of caste into a new occupational category. *Vellalan, chetty, mudali, pattakkaran, koundan, manradiyar, pallavarayan, nattanmai, urkoundan, periyathanathukaran, tiruneelakandar*, etc., are certain titles, which have frequent appearances.

6.1 Koundar

The title *koundar* is quite popular among the caste groups in Kongu and its surrounding area. The use of the term in the historical records of early periods comparatively less, but during the medieval period it became a fascinating title for various caste groups. Presumably, there are two meanings, which bring value to this term. First, it points to leadership of a village or group of villages that had power to extend control over the local administration and possibly revenue collection. Secondly, they were big landlords who owned large tracts of land, major portion of them were under tenant cultivation. When the tribal or local kin groups settled permanently and emerged as peasant folk, they were to bring in the existing administrative system, thus the chiefs of these types were given the title *koundar*. Therefore, *koundar* would mean both chief of local social groups as well as local administrative representative of the state. During the early period, the titles like *urar* and *nattar* were used more or less to denote similar meanings. Though these terms continued to exist in other places, in the Kongu region they were replaced by *ur koundar* and *nattu koundar*, meaning the chief of village and *nadu* respectively. The origin of the title is being derived from the title *kamintan*, which was quite popular in Karnataka regions particularly during the rule of Kongani dynasty.²⁶ Since the Kongani rulers extended their authority over the northern part of the Kongu region as well, the title might have made its southwards penetration.

²⁶ Ramamurthi, *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal*, op.cit., p. 207.

In the context of Tamil south, the title is quite specific to the Kongu region for considerable time and then its presence gradually appeared in the other parts. The native tribes could have used the label during the initial stage and when it did not make much sense than simply a chief of the tribal villages. For example, the *vettuva* chiefs of the Kongu region had the title during the early medieval period. When various communities began to settle in the region, much more intensively, the community leaders who established village (more often by clearing forest) settlement and acquired land rights, the native practice of bearing *koundar* title could have been adopted by the immigrant community leaders. However, now the title had established entirely a different connotation to mean a powerful corporate authority exercising political, economic and ritual power. From the perspective of *varna* ideology, adapting the *koundar* title in a sense helped the social groups to strip off their *shudra* identity in order to acquire *kshatria* status.²⁷ The label later became title of all people who had kin relation with the *koundar* chiefs. The marriage relation and aspiration to pretentious power and status were certain factors that led to the spread of the titles to other kinsmen.

At present in Kongu, major land-holding castes have this label in addition with their personal caste name, of them the *kongu vellalar koundar* are dominant both in economic and numerical strength. They are followed by the *vettuva koundar*. Like *vellala*, the *vettuva*, the native tribe of the region, emulated *kshatriya* status during the medieval period. In addition to these two caste groups, there were more than 16 castes, which, at present, have this title with their respective caste names.²⁸ And the adaptation of the title by them seems to be a later phenomenon, happened when bearing *koundar* title was considered as signifier of *kshatriya* status. These later *koundars* were not economically, politically powerful since they were numerically minority and most of them did not engage in agriculture.

The *kongu vellala koundars* were the dominant among all *koundars* and under their economic and political dominance came major part of the Kongu region. As referred in Case-1, the settlement of *vellala* in 24 *nadu* divisions was a hallmark in the

²⁷ Suvira Jaiswal, 'Varna Ideology and Social Change', *Social Scientist*, Vol.19, No.3/4, 1991, pp.41-48.

²⁸ They are Narampu Koundar, Nattak Koundar, Okkiliyak Koundar, Akamudiyak Koundar, Thirumudi Koundar, Thondak Koundar, Thozhuvak Koundar, Pallik Koundar, Padiyachi Koundar, Modavandi Koundar, Padaithalai Koundar, Siviya Koundar Senthalai Koundar, Pavala Velalak Koundar, Pala Velalak Koundar, Sangu Velalak Koundar, and Malayalak Koundar. Most of these Koundar categories seem to be sub divisions of Vellala Koundar.

history of the region, thereafter the political network of the *kongu koundars* developed into a greater extent. Since the title *koundar* became a special label for all people belong to *vellala* kin, the leader of the *vallala* were distinguished with the titles of *urkoundar* (head of the village) and *nattu koundar*. *Koundars*, as discussed were in charge of revenue collection and assessment within his territory and they were entitled to look after their local affairs without any direct intervention of the state. The *koundar* soon developed as a corporate group and thus they were able to bring most parts of Kongu under their kin-network. Territory of the *vettuva koundars* were gradually came into the hands of *kongu vellala koundar* either through mutual transaction or through military force. Many instances the *vettuva koundars* seem to have been under the political authority of *vellala koundars*. Whenever certain decisions were made, *vellala koundar* appeared to be in the decision-making status and the *vettuva koundars* had been as witness along with the representatives of various other communities.

Similarly, not all *vellala koundars* were leaders, a good number of them were simply small-scale cultivators. But their connection and kin relation with the politically powerful *koundars* enabled them to dominate the entire social set-up. Several social documents were documents of decision made by the community leaders of particular caste or Kongu *vellala koundars*. The documents of other caste groups needed to have the acceptance of *vellala koundars* of concerned localities. Similarly, in no cases a decision had been made with involvement of single *koundar*, whereas there was always confederation of *vellala koundars* from different localities, which exercised the jurisdiction. If the issue was serious and concern of all communities of different territories, the *vellala koundars* of all 24 *nadus* gathered together to take decision (Case 2). Most of the documents, in which the *koundars* acted as jury, deal with issues of temple festival, land transaction, caste rules and privileges, community disputes, donating land to lower caste people, bringing alien communities from far off places and facilitating their settlement in their region, allocating the duties and revenue for various communities, appointing *devadasi*, etc.

6.2 Manradiyar

The title *manradiyar* had been in use right from the beginning of the 13th century. The inscriptions of Kongu Cholas from northwestern part of the Kongu regions bring numerous references to *manrattu* and *manradiyar*. In inscriptions, the term *manrattu* is referred to land or administrative unit, which probably came under the direct control of the state (Chart-4, No. 15). *Manrattu* is sometimes identified with *devadana*. According to an inscription, the *devadana* land had been divided into seven *manrattus* (Chart-3, No.12). *Manrattu kani* (land of *manrattu*), *manrattu pattinam* (the town of *manrattu*) and *manruppadu* (probably a tax collected from a *manrattu*) are also find references (Chart-3, No.17). The term *mannarai* is also closer to *manrattu*. It was used to refer 'the land of king'. At the beginning, the titles had been possessed by leaders, who belonged to different communities. But during the time of social documents, only a few leaders from the *vellala koundars* and *vettuva koundars* had the title. Some of their descendants are still politically powerful and hold the title. Several 13th century inscriptions from Perur give personal names of some people who had *manradi* title. *Katarrur manradi thiruvekampamudaiyan* (Chart-3, No.12), *katarrur maradi kavannan naraya kanattu vellalan* (Chart-3, No.14), *Katarrur manradi vanji velalan*, *kartarrur manradi uyan thiruvezhamudaiyan*, *kavaivazhi nattu katarrur rarasa nallur manradi kavan cholan nan veerachola irunkolan*, *kmarapuyankara nallur manradi pattan*, *perur manradi thiruvengkadudaiyan vergankan*, *uyyank konda chola mannarai*, *athisaya chola mannarai*, etc., are some *manradi* holders, who presumably affiliated with the Kongu Chola administration(Chart-3, No.12). Some *manradi* have used their community name *velalan* (vellalar) along with other usual titles such as *udaiyar* and *velan* (Chart-3, No. 20). Personal names of Chola rulers also appear in some cases. In another inscription from the same place, names of seven brahman *manradi* are mentioned. Of them, the holder of *manrattu velankalil ur brahmanan kausiya kottirathu devan cettiyana rajaraja brahmarayan manrattu*, has *velan*, *brahmarayan*, *chetty*, and *devan* titles as well (Chart-3, No. 5).

During the Madurai Nayakkar period, *manradiyar* would have become a powerful title denoting administrative rights and local military unit. In this period, *Manradiyar* emerged from *koundars*. By the time, the title *koundar* become almost a caste name used by *vellalar* and *vettuvuar* castes. The other titles such *manradiyar*, *pallavarayar*, *kalinkarayar*, etc., were used as for the power-indicating titles. At the

village level, the titles such as *ur koundars* and *nattuk koundars* distinguished the power holders from the ordinary *koundars*. In the long run, the *manradiyars* were able to possess huge tracts of land consisting of several villages. Thus, some of the *manradiyars* family emerged out as local *zamindars* exercising enormous political and economic power.²⁹ They were administrators in charge of the areas under their territorial jurisdiction and several *ur koundars* and *nattu koundars* came under them (Chart-4, No.41). They functioned like a feudal lord under various dynasties till early modern period. A number of social documents referred in this chapter have the names of different *manradiyar*. With their presence, local issues were discussed and settled (Chart-4, No.3, 11, 12, etc). *Manradiyars* are also chief contributors to both brahmanical and the non-brahmanical temples and initiated several brahmanical temple constructions. During the medieval period, the *maradiyar* rights became hereditary. There are number of copper plates, palm leaf documents and folk traditions such as *vamsavali*, which give the detailed genealogical history of *manradiyar* families.³⁰ Among them, *pazhayakottai sarkarai manradikal*, *kadaiyur kangeya manradikal* and *ulakudai manradikal* families ruled for a considerable period of time.

With regard to *pazhayakottai sarkarai manradikal*, palm leaves documents dealing with 27 *manradikal* of this family have been printed with the title of *pazhaya kottai pattakkarar nattu padalum poorva pattayamum* (the folk songs of *pazhaya kottaip pattakkarar* and the charter of *poorva*).³¹ *Pattakkarar* is a general title for all *manradies* and other chiefs who had similar political and economic power. In between their personal name and the *manradi* title, the phrase *sarkarai uthama kamintan* appear in the names of all chiefs of this family. The chiefs of *pazhayakottai manradikal* belong to *payiran* clan of *kongu vellala koundar* caste. *Kadaiyur kangeya manradikal* are said to have received their title and administrative power from the Pandiya rulers and they were also administered the Kangeya region as representatives of Vijayanagara rulers.³² During the Vijayanagara rule, they also received another title *immadi*. Kangeya Manradiyars belonged to *porulantha* clan of *kongu vellalar*. Nearly 28 *pattakkarars* of

²⁹ Palm leaves documents with regard to genealogical history of Manradiyar family has been collected and edited by K. Arunachala Koundar in his *Pazhaya Kottai Pattakkarar Nattu Padalum Poorva Pattayamum* (Folk Traditions about Pazhaya Kottai Pattakkarar and the Charter of Poorva), Shanmugam Press, Chennai, 1965.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Nal.Natarajan, *Kongu Velalar Varalaru* (The History of Kongu Velalar), Pallavi Pathipakam, Erode, 2001, p.196

Kalingarayar dynasty ruled from middle of 13th century to the end of 17th century. Among them, Kalingaraya Koundar is famous ruler. A social document with regard to the construction of a dam by this ruler has been discussed in Case-12. They belonged to *sathanthai* clan of *vellalar* community. Name of other *vellala manradiar* families and their clan names are as follow: 1) Venaduudaiya Manradiyar-*periyar* clan, 2) Pallavaraya Manradiyar- *senkanna* clan, 3) Vanavaraya Manradiyar-*pavala* clan, 4) Kanappa Manradiyar – *ennai* clan, Kavarai Manradiyar *mula* clan, 5) Valai Manradiyar-*ponna* clan, 6) Deva Manradiyar- *kuzhaya* clan and 7) Yezhunurruvan Manradiyar-*kannanthai* clan. Immadi Koppanna Manradiar, who belonged to *vettuva* caste, was famous among the leaders from this community (Chart-4, No.17). According to traditions, more than 21 leaders from this family ruled till the Madurai Nayaka period.³³

6.3 Pattakkarar, Pallavarayar and Kangeyar

As stated, *pattakkarar* is a general name for all local chiefs. There were several villages, under their control. All *manradiyars*, *pallavarayars*, *kangeyar*, etc., were *pattakkarar*.³⁴ There were also *pattkarar* without any special titles. They were also known as *palayakkarars* during the time of Madurai Nayakkas. Several chiefs from *vellala* and *vettuva* community in Kongu had held the *pallavarayar* title. *Kangeya pallavarayrs* were notable chiefs from the *vellala* community. They are said to have received the title from the Chola rulers.³⁵ The chiefs of this family have used names such as *amaravathi pallavarayar* and *chidampara pallavarayar* in alternate order.³⁶ They were very powerful during the time of Chola and the Pandiyas. In addition to military support to the ruler, taxation and tax collection, they also had the responsibility to settle all local disputes. The social documents carry the decision or the orders of these local chiefs on certain local issues. There was a close network among the *manradiyars*, *pallavaryars*, *kangeyar* and all other important *koundars* of different region, as it is explicit in the social documents (Chart-4, No.41).

While some of the early power titles such as *koundar*, *mudali*, etc., became caste title during the medieval time, the other set of titles such *pattakkarar*, *manradiyar*, *pallavarayar*, etc., began to emerge as a symbol of political authority. These titleholders

³³ Ibid, p.176.

³⁴ V.Ramamurthi, *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal*, op.cit., p. 207.

³⁵ Nal.Natarajan, *Kongu Velalar Varalaru*, op.cit., p. 176.

³⁶ Ibid.

belonging to various communities formed into a local ruling class. The numerical strength of their community, land-ownership based power and prestige ensured their higher status. As seen the case of *koundar* during the early period, these new status groups became a source or model of mobility for others.

7. Clan System and Internal Stratification

The clan system is a significant aspect in the Kongu social formation. A clan, generally known as *kootam*, is an exogamous division within a caste. The castes such as *kongu vettuva* and *kongu vellala* are said to have more than 100 *kootams* in each.³⁷ In each caste, there seems to be a hierarchical system based on *kootam*. In other parts of Tamil Nadu, the castes like *vellalar*, *kaikolar*, *kammalar*, *chetty*, *navithan*, etc., do not have such an elaborated clan form, while it is a case in all these castes in Kongu. More than the regional specificity, it shows the continuation of early tribal system of social stratification.

The origin of this specific regional development can be traced in two particular aspects, which are again specific to this region. First of all, the region was less affected by brahmanical institutions and ideology and retained its individuality throughout its historical time. Three early medieval states, the Pallavas, the Pandiyas and the Cholas, which adapted the Brahmanism as state religion, were not able to extend their complete suzerainty over this region. The emergence of a political (state) system owed more to local developments rather than subjugation to external states. It reflected in social and cultural sphere since the existing socio-cultural practices presumably carried various rudiments of a tribal society. Clan system of these local communities was supposedly such.

The clan divisions and totemic practices are often related with the tribal system rather than caste system. But when the tribes transferred or incorporated into the caste system, it also carried its all pre-existing divergent social and occupational categories. For example, as a tribe the *vettuva* was small ethnic division, within which there was a number of exogamous social segments with their distinct socio-cultural folk practices.

³⁷ Rajasekara Thankamani, 'Namakkal Mavattathil Vettuvur' (Vettuvur in Namakkal District), in Kavingar. Tamilnadan (ed), *Salem Mavattam: Sila Ayyukal* (Studies on Salem District), Kavya Publication, Bangalore, 1988, pp. 99-101. Nal.Natarajan, *Kongu Velalar Varalaru*, op.cit., p. 66.

When they came to be identified as a caste, there was not much alteration in the early social stratification.

Why did the *vellala* and other castes in Kongu have elaborated clan divisions while it is not seen among the same castes of the plain regions.³⁸ Probably two presumptions can be drawn in this regard. First, these different occupational categories would have developed from the indigenous tribes and taken their respective caste names when they were assimilated to a caste based social system. Or secondly, the indigenous tribal practices might have been adopted by the various migrant castes when they settled in the Kongu region. Clubbing these two, one can also presume that the migrant occupational groups would have merged with their respective indigenous occupational categories and consequently developed into a caste.

Clan system among the *vettuvās* and *vellalās*, the two dominant landholding communities in Kongu, may not, however, match with the general definition and nature of clan structure in tribal society. For example, it is not that all clans have their own totem symbols with which the clan has reverend relationship. And the origin of the most of the clans is not known. Particularly, the clan names of *vettuvār* community give no clue to traces their origin. Some clan names are common in both castes. However, a few clan name and practices in *vellala* community are comparable with the tribal system. For instances, it is said that totem symbol of *varagunna perunkudiyan* is *varaku* (one variety of millets). Similarly *pill* (a millet) for *pillan* clan, *vendaikai* (ladies finger) for *venduvan* clan, *pannai kirai* (a variety of greens) for *pannan* clan, palm tree for *panankadai* clan, *Sempotthu* (a bird) for *sempotthu* clan, *kadai* (a bird) for *kadai* clan, owl for *anthai* clan, *thuvurai* (a millet) *thuran* clan, etc., can be identical tradition of totem beliefs. The people of this clan are said that they would not consume these grains or animal of their totem. But the practices in the modern time might have been disappeared.³⁹

³⁸ The texts such as *Kongumandala Sathakam* of Valasundra Kavirayar and *Othalar Azhakumalai Kuravanji* of Cinnathampi Pulavar gives detailed descriptions about various *kootams* (clans) of Kongu Vellalar. For extracts from these texts see, Rasu, *Kathankanni Ventuvakula Varalaru* (History of Kathankanni Ventuva Clan), Erode, 1998, pp.42-43.

³⁹ Nal.Natarajan, *Kongu Velalar Varalaru*, op.cit., p. 62.

Among the *vettuvar*'s *kootams*, *manthapadi*, *varaka*, *chiruthalia*, *makali*, *venkachi*, *vill*, *vizhakku*, *karumpili*, *kunnadi*, *machadi*, *kudumi*, *pandimandhai padu*, *vempu*, *karai*, *mokali*, *munna*, etc., are frequently seen. *Perungudi*, *kadai*, *venduvan*, *kannanthai*, *payiran*, *kanna*, *semban*, *koorai*, *enjan*, *panakadai*, *sellan*, *thodai*, *othala*, *anthai*, *vannakkan*, *kulayan*, *anthuvan*, *keerai*, *viliyan*, *devanthira*, *porulantha*, *periyar*, *sathanthai*, *poosa*, *pannan*, *methia*, *senkannar*, *maniya*, *ceran*, *pandiyan*, *panakan*, *pavazhan*, *thodai*, *thuran*, *thulanku*, *mudiyan*, etc., are some *vellala kootams* that appear with the personal names of *vellala koundars*.

All *kootams* are not equal in terms of their political and economic power. And not all *kootams* have marriage relations with one another. Those *kootams* who have equal status often go for marriage relationships. Thus, there is social hierarchy within the caste itself. Similarly, only some *kootams* emerged as dominant land owning groups while others were either small-scale cultivators or tenants. In addition to the common history of *vellala* and the Kongu *vellala*, a few *kootams* maintain their mythology describing some events about their migration and settlement in a particular locality (Chart-4, No. 16). Each *kootam* had in their community local deity called *kula deivam* (Chart-4, No. 34). Initially, each *kootam* had their settlements and agricultural lands in particular village, but in course of time, several *kootams* began to live together in a village due to marriage agreements, land transfers and internal migration (Case 1). If a few *kootams* live together, they were divided according to their order of settlement in the village. The terms like *mudhalam kaniyalar*, *irandam kaniyalar* and *munram kaniyalar* are respectively meant first, second and third rights in a village. A social document records a mutual agreement reached by concerned people with regard to rights over local temple. Of this, *muthalam kaniyalar* had more rights than the other. Major *vellala* clans have a tradition of folk songs called *kanipadalkal* (songs on land), which narrates the *kani* rights and settlement history of the particular clan. In a few cases, there was dispute and fight between two *kootams* in capturing land in a village. As a result, one *kootam* lost its *kani* rights over a village and migrated to other place (Chart-4, No. 23). A detailed study on the clan division of *kongu vellalar* and their settlement in the region will certainly bring out some interesting aspects about the rural settlement in Medieval Kongu.

8. Complexity and Tension

At the end of the 16th century, the social stratification had reached into its extreme and the caste formation had taken a clear shape. There were sub-castes within a caste and within a sub-caste a number of clan divisions. As castes began to inhabit together in a village settlement, it created a persisting tension in society. Clashes over the status, power, and privileges became frequent scene. Land ownership became a symbol of power and authority. Economically advanced caste even tried to change their *varna* identity. Especially, there was a huge rush towards Kshatriya status. Low castes in the view of Hindu *varnashrama dharma* began to adopt some caste titles of well off in their efforts toward upward mobility. Delineating, the code and conducts, social rights and privileges and, cultural taboos and physical behaviors of each caste was necessary in order to avoid emulation. While the upper castes were very much conscious as to retain their higher position in the hierarchy, the lower ones always tried to compete with the caste to their immediate top. By perpetuating the system by various means, the higher castes aspired to get free services and cheap labourers from the lower castes. By making organized attempts, the lower castes sometimes challenged the upper ones. If some castes' social mobility was inevitable, it made immense impacts on the entire system. Except a few dependent castes, all other began to develop their own *purana* about their origin. Thus historical and ideological constructions helped them to justify their current position. Myths were reconstructed as castes trying for an upward mobility. When the upper castes manipulated their power showing connections with rulers, being patron of the brahmanical religion and posing as leaders of the people, the lower castes in their part tried to incorporate their history with the traditions of upper castes. The stories about their origin were often connected with that of the dominant landowning castes rather than directly situating them in the brahmanical traditions. All these developments created a complex system of stratification animating a perpetual internal social tension. It was quite explicit among the castes, especially in the middle ranges. The much talked left and right-hand castes divisions in south India are probably a product of this social tension. In this section, we will briefly analyze the relevance of right and left hand divisions to the medieval Kongu.

The terms *valangai* and *idangai* that appear in the Kongu inscriptions beginning from the 13th century were not used in the context of social divisions. A 12th century inscription from Namakkal mentions *pullai vettuvan koothadum devans irunkolan*

valangai mikaman (Chart-3, 210). Similarly, a personal name, Ammattam Therintha Kaikolan Vadukanana Idangaiyar is mentioned in another inscription belonging to the 13th century (Chart-4, No.39). Sometimes, the deities have been named as *valangai nayanar* and *idangai nayanar* (Chart-4, No.12). According to an inscription, *valangai* 98 castes are said to have given the charge of a temple (Chart-3, No. 21). First time, the terms *valangai* and *idangai* in the sense of two contending social divisions appear in a copper plate probably dated to the second half of the 16th century. The crux of the description is as follows.

Case-22: After visiting Kopponna Koundar, the Palayakkarar of this nadu, *idangai* Asari of five castes arranged marriage for Kanakkan, son of Muthukumar. During the wedding procession the groom came on elephant back. On seeing this, the *chettiyar* belonged to *valangai* division objected this ritual pointing that the *asarikal* of *idangai* division do not have this right to take their groom on elephant. A dispute arose over the issue and finally the case was taken to Koppanna Koundar. Each contested party strongly adhered to their position. Referring to a copper plate preserved in Kanjipuram, the *asarikal* claimed that they have been given this right of elephant procession in their wedding. On the direction of Koppanna koundar, the two parties reached an agreement to visit Kanjipuram in order to refer the original document. They agreed to a bet of paying 10 heads and 12000 pon in case their claim was proved incorrect. A team consisting Rama Nayakkan, servant of Koppanna Koundar, Thithiyappa Chetty, Devi Chetty, Viran Chetty and Venkadapathi Chetty, the representatives of Chetty community, and Kokka Thattan, Pomma Thachan, Prama thattan, Mindu Kanakkan, Velayutha Thachan, Thiruvankida Kollan, Peththak Kollan, Arasar Kollan, Azhkiri Kollan, Kannar Angumayyan, Kalvelaikara Arasan Asari went to Kancipuram, met concerned person and submitted the request of Koppanna Koundan to consult the said copper plate. The charter was with Venkatachalapathi iyer, the priest of Kamachiyamman temple. He demanded 260 *pon* to refer the charter. Finally, the charter was read after paying the amount. It read, 'the *visvakarma* have the rights of elephant procession, *panjavarna* umbrella, *panjavarna* award, *kathi kattar* and *amma thadal*. The parties came back to their place. As decided, the *valangai chettiyar* had to pay the fine (Chart-4, No.38).

In fact the tradition of getting special rights from rulers and having them inscribed was again not new, rather references in this regard appears right from beginning of the 11th century. Interestingly it was initiated by the migrant brahmans. Irunkur Copper Plate of the 11th century lists the special social rights given to a Brahman family. By this charter the brahmans were entitled to use single conch and double conch at the time of wedding, apply sandal paste to their legs, use green shawl, have second storey in their house and to plaster (probably with cement) their houses (Chart-4, No. 31). *Kammalas* had declared their rights received from the king through an

inscription. The copies of the inscription were placed in different places (Chart-4, No. 45). Thereafter, they could use double conch, *padharaktshai* and they were also allowed to plaster their house. *Kaikolar* and *devaradiyars* living in *thirumadiavalakam* received special permission to sell and mortgage their land (Chart-4, No.14). When *vetkovars* were settled in Kongu, they obtained a half of social rights of ruling landholding *vellalas* (Case 24). Another copper plate of Otta Nayakka community describes various rules and caste regulations after confirming their acceptance to pay a *kanikkai* (tribute) of Rs.1/4 per a headload to temple. It reads as follows:

Case-23: Those who do not obey the above the order can be evicted from our caste. They cannot enjoy the privileges such as *ondithasar*, *villari*, *sevakaram*, *thuthori*, *vensamaram*, *pachaikodi*, *vellaikodi*, etc. According to our caste regulations young widow can remarry. But if husband is alive, woman should not marry. If anyone does not follow our caste regulation, Periyathanakararar can write to our Jatiyar (chief of jati). Others should keep quite until the *jatiyar* settle the issue. Our jati practices should be based on our *jati* moral values and ethical conducts. On our community weddings, *pachaikodi*, *vellaikudai*, *thivetti*, *kuthirai vakanam* should be done on the line of our caste tradition (Chart-4, No. 38).

In addition to these, there had been a prolonged struggle between the *vellala*, and the *vettuva* (basically a hill and forest tribe) for the supremacy over land and temple rights. The same sort contradictions and quarrels appeared between two *kootams* of *vellala* community. Therefore, it is implicit that there was an uneasy situation prevailed among various sections of society at different levels of social hierarchy. Given these limited references, it is not possible here to make a detailed analysis on *idangai* and *valangai* social divisions. The social cleavage, in fact, began to appear predominantly during the modern period than the medieval times.⁴⁰

To reiterate some of the core arguments in this chapter, Kongu regions continued to be a place for migration during the medieval times. Divergent social groups began to settle from various parts of south India. There were also several cases of internal migration within the region. The *kongu vellalar* were able to evolve as a dominant landholding community and a section of new local rulers emerged out of the community. The use of the term *koundar* by all kinsmen of both *kongu vellalar* and *vettuvar* peasants show the overall mobility of the peasants within the regional context. As *koundar* became a caste name, the titles such as *manradiyar*, *pattakkarar*, *pallavarayar*, *kalingarayar*, etc., signified the socioeconomic and political its holders.

⁴⁰ V.Ramamurthi, *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal*, op.cit., p. 215.

There were land transactions in large number, of these; the transition of land rights from *vettuvar* to *kongu vellalar* is more significant. Medieval Kongu witnessed the multiplication of number of castes groups. There were competition and negotiation among the caste groups in order to secure power and privileges. It propelled a persistence tension and rivalry among them. By the end of the sixteenth century, the rank and position of the almost all caste in the social hierarchy was fixed. The emulation was forbidden, even then it was constantly challenged. Despite the diffusion of brahmanical ideology deep into the lower stratum of the society, within this land based caste structure brahman exercised less control or power than the land owning non-brahman castes. Therefore, in addition to the socio-economic advantages, the numerical strength of particular caste is also a causative factor that determined the caste hierarchy. Acquiring the rights over the local temples was considered as essential for the dominant landowning castes. It symbolized their power within the locality. All major castes began to construct their own mythological history tracing their origin with godly figures in the brahminical texts. There were internal divisions within a caste. The *kootam* stratification within the *vellalar* and *vettuvar* requires a detailed anthropological study. Finally, the picture of village communities and their traditions and beliefs that emerge out from the discussion in the previous sections contradicts with the inscription-based studies. The reading of social documents provides an alternative approach to study the birth of peasant society and nature of village communities during the medieval times.

Chart 4: Social Documents

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
1. Kongu Kaniyana Pattayam. Being preserved in Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	1. Karikala, the Chola king, had become insane due to some previous curse of a sage. 2. Pilgrimage of <i>vellala</i> from the Chola Mandalam to the Kongu country under the leadership of the Saiva pontiff Anda Sivasubrahmanya Guru of Tirukkadaiyur . 3. Refusal of Kambanattan, a poet of Kongu region, to let them in as their caste and clan (kulam and gotram) affiliations were not known. 4. Request of the vellalas to provide them with those particulars 5. The <i>vellalas</i> acquired <i>kani</i> and settled in the twenty four nadas of the Kongu. 6. Each nadu was given a guru initiated by the Tirukkadaipur pontiff (Anda Gurusami), and many temples and <i>agrarahas</i> were established.	Vellalan, Brahman, Sengunthar, Mudali	Koundan, Manradi	II. Ceran, Pandiya, Periyar, Thuran, Anthai, Kadai, Mudiyan, Othala, Pannan, Paiyra, Koventhiran, Sathanthai, Kadai	SDK-1
2. Charter of Ramapattiran. Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	It is an account submitted by Ramapattiran to Mandalikar Kandar (a subordinate chief of Vijayanagara king). After describing the boundary of the Kongu region, it gives details about physical geography of the region	Brahman, Chetty, Mudali, Puluvan, Mavuluvan, Vedan, Vettuvan, Kongu Chetty, Arasupalli, Idaiya, Tottiya, Yadava, Sanuppa, Palla, Paraiya, and Chakkiliyar			SDK-2
3. Tirumuruganpundi Sale Deed. Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	Sale of the devasthanams of Tirumuruganpundi and Avinasi and the village of Tirumuruganpundi by Viravikkiramacholiyanda Koundar. This is in lieu of a loan he had taken from Elumattur Ponga Koundar and two others when he was compelled by the Nayaka king of Madurai for payment of his tax arrears within a short duration.	(I). Koundar, Brahman, Sena Pokam, Sutha Sangeetham, Sathiriayar, Thesathar, Irupathunangumanayar, Islamiyar, Kampalathar, Devangachetty, Vellala Chetty, Sengunthar, Karunika, Panjalar (Kannan, Kollan, Thachan), Puluvan, Uppliyar, Veeramushti, Andi, Nakapasathar, Isakkalanjar, Thasikal, Mannudaiyar, Yekali, Navithar, Variyar, Mallan		I) nill (II).Panakadai , Anthai, Othala, Maniya, Sathanthai	SDK-3

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
4. Mukunthanallur Grant. Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	Purchase of rights in several villages like Mukunthanallur, Thiruppur, etc, by Choliyanda Koundar from Kasilinga Chetty, a Kongu Chetty for 1000 ponakaram (a coin).	(I). Kongu Chetty Koundan, Vellalar, Sengunthar, Pulavan, Andi, Kuyavan, Navithan, Thotti	Koundan, Pattakkaran	(II). Panankadai, Sathathanthai, Senkannar, Payiran, Kadai, Puralantha, Enjan, Sivanthi, (III) Manradiyar, Palai Vellala	SDK-4
5. Thiruvachi Sale Deed. Collected from C.N.Velliyankiri, Chinnipalayam, Erode.	Kulla Kaliyappa Koundar of Otalan clan in Paranchervali and Chennimalai Koundar of Anthai clan in Vellaikoyil purchased the village Tiruvanchchi in Pundurai Nadu from Velayudam, a Kongu Chetty for grazing purposes. Some leading people of the locality including some pattakkaran attested to the deed as witnesses.	(I). Nayakkar, Koundan, Vettuvan, Kongu Chetty, Thotti	(II). Pattakkaran, Ketti Mudali, Manradiyar	(I).Poovani (II) Othala, Anthai, Semban, Saththantha, Enjan, Methia	SDK-5
6. Nallur Sale Deed. Collected from Nachimuthu, Thambirtti Palayam.	Purchase of the <i>Kaniyatchi</i> rights over half of the village of Nallur by Choliyappa Koundar. The purchaser had actually gone over to this place in search of grazing land while the seller was administering the area as an agent of the Nayakka king. It is said that the latter had to resort to the sale, as he could not pay the government taxes due from his territory.	Koundan, Kongu Chetty, Iyer, Andi, Pandaram, Thotti,	Koundan, Manradiyar, Pallavarayar,	II. Kulayan Kootam, Santhan Kootam, Othala,	SDK.7
7. Pidariur Grant-1. Collected from a private institution, Chennimalai.	Kumara Velappa Koundar of Anthai Clan of Valliyaraichchal on his marriage to vellai Velammal, daughter of Chenkoda Koundar of Piralandan clan of Pidariyur was given the <i>kani</i> rights over 4, 000 vallam of dry land in Pidariyur. Previously during the rule of Kudumi Vettuvan, Shivabrahmanan and Kongu Chetty, Kootta Koundar of Enjankulam married off his daughter, Vellai Pazhaniyammal, to Kuzhanthai Velappa Koundar of Porulantha clan, and gave land from Pidariyur.	Koundar, Vettuvan, Shiva Brahmanan, Thanikan, Andi, Thotti, Paraiyan	Koundar,	II. Payiran, Sathanthai, Inkuru Enjan, Porulantha.	SDK-8

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
8. Pidariyur Grant-II	When Ponkaliyappa Pidariyur in search of grazing grounds for his cattle, he married Vellaïmmal, the Vellaippillai Suriyalichcha Koundar of Piralanda clan of Pidariyur and got a quarter portion of the <i>kani</i> rights in that village as dowry. Previously the <i>kani</i> right of the village was with Shiva Brahmana, Chetty, Kudumi Vettuvār and people of Porulantha Kootam, Anthai Kootam, and Kurai Kootam. It has been signed by Kangeyam Manradiyar, Sakkarai Koundan, Pallavaraya Koundan, Senni Andi and Senba Thotti, etc.	I. Vettuvan, Vellala, Shiva Brahmana, Kongu Chetty, Andi, Thotti, Chetty	Manradiyar, Pallavarayan, Koundan,	I.Kudumi II. Porulantha, Anthai, Koorai	SDK-9
9. Charter of the Kongu Poets. Santhalinkar Thirumadam, Perur.	Records in great detail the rights and duties of the poets (<i>pulavar</i>) attached to the Kongu Vellala clans of the twenty-four Nadus. A petition made to the Vijayanagara king Devarayappa asking for a charter relating to these matters the king gave this one on the basis of some previous documents issued during the time of Kulottunga, the Chola king. The names of the poets and their respective patron clans and their territorial jurisdiction, their remunerations(milk, cash and grain fees) they were entitled to on the occasion of auspicious ceremonies of the members of their patron clans are all given. Finally the nattar of the twenty four nadus attest to the charter. The clan of each of the nattar is also mentioned.	Soliya Kula Vellalar, Sengunthar, Thakkai Kotti, Koothadi, Kongu Chetty, Kongu Vellalar, Pillai, etc.	Manradiyar, Koundan	II. Cera, Porulantha, Payiran, Cenkana, Kadai, Sathanthai, Kanna, Poosa, Anthai, Ponna, Othala, Enjan, Koorai, Sivanthi, etc	SDK-12
10. Charter of Kuruppu Nadu. Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	Agreement regarding the social ranking among some (Kongu Vellala) clans of Kuruppu-Nadu with reference to receipt of honors in the Vijayapuriamman temple at Vijayamangalam and in the Kadittachalar temple at Uttukkuli. The agreement was arrived at the by the Koundar of all the thirty two villages of Kuruppunadu.	Vettuva, Vellala, Sengunthar	Koundan, Padaithalai Koundar, Manradiyar, Pallavarayar, Venadudaiyar.	II. Kadai, Periyar, Porulantha, Othala, Payiran, Pala, Sivanthi, Enjan, etc	SDK-13

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
11. Charter of Kangeyanadu. Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	Conferment of the poet-ship right on a called Chennimalaippulavar by the members of several clans, viz., Athi, Anduvar, Kadai, of Kiranur in Kangeyanadu in the presence of Kangayamanradi of Kadaiyur and Charkkarai Manradi of Palaiyakottai	Koundan	Koundan, Manradiyar	II. Athi, Kadai, Anthuva, Viliyan,	SDK-14
12. Ponnivadi Charter. Collected from Puthupai Pulavar, Darapuram.	Conferment, by the Sekan clan of Ponivadi and some other villages in Pongalur Nadu, of the poet-ship rights on Tirukkaivelppulavar who was appointed as their Pulavar. The said clan is said to have acquired the kani rights of the above villages by sword.	Chetty, Vellalan, Sengunthar	Manradiyar, Koundan	-	SDK-15
13. Charter of Chennimalai Pulavar. Collected from Puthupai Pulavar, Darapuram	Conferment of the poetship on Chennimalai Pulavar by the Koundar of some villages in Kuruppu Nadu	Koundan	Koundan	-	SDK-16
14. Kodumanal charter. Collected from Puthupai Pulavar, Darapuram	Assignment of the poetship to two different poets by two clans of Kuruppu Nadu. It is said that previously one and the same poet had been ministering to both the clans and now it was felt as inappropriate. Hence the new arrangement. the koundar from several villages met at Uttukkuli to decide this matter.	Thentisai Vellala, Kongu Vellala, Padaithalai Vellala	Koundan, Vellalan	-	SDK-17
15. Charter of Twenty-four Nadu. Tamil University, Tanjore.	Dispute relating to the poet Kambar vis a vis the Chola king. It is said that the poet was consistent in extolling the greatness of the Kongu Vellala and preferred the humble gifts that he received from them to the great riches proffered by the Chola king.	Vellalar, Sengunthar	Nattar,	-	SDK-18

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
16. Charter of Kalingarayan Dam. Tamil University, Tanjore.	When Lingaiyan initiated plans to build a dam across the river Vaniyaru near Erodu on Vellai Vettuvan obstructed the building of the dam as the dam site was within his territorial jurisdiction. In the subsequent feuds a Kaliyannan helped Lingaiyan's companions to kill Vellai Vettuvan. In appreciation of this help Kaliyannan was given the title of 'caste leader' with all the accompanying privileges by Koundars of several nadu. The copies of this charter were inscribed in the Kandiyamman temple at Kiranur, Devisura temple at Arumulanallur and Minakshiamman temple at Madurai.	Vettuvan, Vellalan, Chetty, Cerakula Velalar, Soliya Vellalar, Palli Vellalar, Udmparai Vellalar, Malaikanda Vellalar, Kenkadi Vellalar, Kudivkkiliyar Reddy Vellalar, Malayan, Kodikal Vellalar, Sayina Vellalar, Vellalan Chetty, Kongu Chetty, Nakara Chetty, Thelungu Chetty, Mootharu Chetty, Sengunthar, Kaikolar, Devangu, Nattandi, Vukachandi, Andi, Sanan, Uppliyar, Navithan, Vannan, Savalakaran, Sempadavan, Vanniyan, Sevithan, Vethan, Pallan, Kosavan, Kuravan, Maravan, Valayan, Paraiyan, Chakkiliyan		-	SDK-21
17. Charter of Tenkarai Nadu. Collected from Puthupai Pulavar, Darapuram	Dispute over the building of a dam across the river Anporunai (Amaravathi). The dispute arose between Achchuta Tondaiman, Venavudaiyan and the royal agent Virapparayar on one side and perhaps the local leaders on the other side. It was taken to the king's court at Madurai for resolution, details of which are not available as the record is incomplete. It is said that Achchuta Tondaiman had been honoured by the Vijayanagara king Achchuta Tondaiman had been honoured by the Vijayanagara king Achchutaraya for his courage and heroic deeds while he was young.	Koundar	Koundan, Thondaiman	-	SDK-22
18. Paruttippalli Grant. Collected from Karuppa Nayakkar, Thiruchenkodu	Records the bestowal of the <i>devadasi</i> title Chellakula-manikki on Atti, daughter of Kandapattar, a Velala-kuttadi of Paruttippalli by the Velalar of Chellan clan. The lady was given the right to enjoyment of some customary fees in money and grain, some tax free land, etc. the first member among the Velalar is mentioned as Cheruman Ulakappa Koundar of Sankagiri who had obtained territory and Udukararai from the Vijayanagara king Krishnadevaraya along with the title Mudali Kamintan.	Koundar, Vellalar, Iyer, Malayalan, Mooppan, Thotti, Mudali, Thachan, Kollan, Andi Muppan, Thotti	Mudali Kamintan. Koundar, Chetty	I. Asuram, Kunnadi, Santhapadai, II. Sellan, Sempootha, Cenkan,	SDK-23

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
19.Charter of Kanna Clan. Tamil University, Tanjore.	Nallatambi Koundar, son of Muthusami Kavundar was honoured by the three Tamil Kings Chera, Chola and Pandiya with the bestowal of the title Mummudi Nallatambi Manradiyar and with the headmanship of Talaiyanadu and assignment of a number of villages as <i>amaram</i> in appreciation of his successful mediation to settle a chronic boundary dispute among them. The second charter relates to the emigration of the descendants of the above person from Kannivadi, their original settlement on account of a caste dispute with the lower-ranking Palli-velalar, a member of whom wanted to marry a girl of their clan. Subsequently they served in the army of the Nayaka king of Madurai, then settled in the Morur area and finally returned to their original place. Actually this charter purports to define the privileges that were given to the priest Nallarandi who played an active role in bringing back the Kanna clan to Kannivadi and in upholding	Chetty, Vettuvar, Paraiyan, Vellalar, Andi, Navithan, Koundan	Manradiyar, Koundan, Pattakarak, Nattanmaikarak	Karumpili, Kunnadi, Machadi II. Kanna, Anthai, Venduvan	SDK-24
22.Pasur Charter II	Promise made by the vellalar of a number of clans in Pundurainadu, Kuruppunadu, and Melkarai Araiyanadu to their spiritual leader Janasivachariyar Immudi Akilanda Dikshitar of Perodu that they would pay him annually five panam per family and also sanchara-kanikkai wherever they settle and live. More than a hundred Koundar from about twenty villages have signed this charter.	Koundan, Vellalan	Koundan	II. Kanna, Kadai, Payiran, Pochanthai, Koorai, Kerai, Pandiyan, Enjan, Panakadai, Sellan, Kari, Pannan, Enkuru, Vannakan, Pillan, Semban, Thuran, Porulantha, Kuzhaya, etc	SDK-26
23. Charter of the Karichikumara Temple	Records the privileges and duties of some three clans of Perodu, viz., Venduvan, Pannan, Perungudiyan with regard to Thekarichikumar temple of the place.	Koundan	Koundan	II.Pannan, Perunkudiyan, Venduvan etc.	SDK-26

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
24. Charter of Porulanthai clan	Dated in the reign of Muttuvira Chokkalinka Nayaka of Madurai. Bestowal of the title porulandaikula mechan (i.e., one who is praised by the porulandai clan) on the poet Ponnali Pulavar who was appointed as their clan poet by the members of the Porulandai clan living in Kilkarai Pundurai- Nadu, Elur Nadu, Paruttippalli Nadu, etc. The poet was also given some wet and garden land and the right to collect grain fees from each household of that clan.	Koundan, Vellalan	Mudali Koundan, Manradiyar	Porulanthai	SDK-29
25. Charter of Varagunna Perunkudi clan	Relates to a dispute between the members of the Perungudi clan and the Kaikkolar over the privileges and honours they received from the temple of Agattisvarar at Tiruppadur. The Nattar of Chengudi helped the former in the dispute and they reciprocated by the grant of this charter which promise some grain and cash fees to the nattar, Koundar of Chengudi.	Vellalar, Kaikolan, Melathar	Koundar, Nattar	II. Varagunna Perunkudi	SDK-30
26. Avulappampatti Charter . Taken from S. Mayilsami collections	Records the grant, by the Koundar (of Avulappampatti) of some land and money to a Paraiya called Uruman, who had offered his wife as a sacrificial victim for the successful celebration of the car festival in honor of the goddess Kariyakaliyamman of Varakka Nadu. It is said that the woman escaped unhurt even after she was run over by the car.	Vellalar, Paraiyar	Koundar, Palayakkarar	-	SDK-31
27. Deed of the Pundurai Nattar. U.V. Swaminathayyar Library, Chennai.	It is recorded that a severe boundary dispute between two villages, viz., Karaiyur, the <i>simial</i> to find an amicable solution to this dispute and fixed the boundaries. The present record is a reciprocator undertaking by the nattar of Pundurai-nadu to abide by the arrangement arrived at by officials.	Vettuvār, Vellalar, Mudali	Mudali, Koundar, Manradiyar, Pillai, Nayakkar, Mudaliyakkoundar	I. Pattali	SDK-33

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
28. Muttur Charter. Collected from V.R.Deyvasikamani	The immediate purpose of the charter is to record the endowments for conducting worship in the shrines of thirteen Viramasatti who gave up their lives by self-immolation on the death of their husbands in a skirmish involving cattle-lift by the Vettuva leader Kongurayan who had Sevalakanikkai rights in Kangeya Nadu. In the earlier portion the details regarding the levy of some oil tax on Radapuram Semai by the Vijayanagara king and the arrest at Sivansamudram of some people from Muttur who defaulted in the Payment of the tax and their subsequent escape from jail with the help of one Madavanathan are given.	Vettuvan, Chetty, Vellalar, Paraiyar, Thachar, Irular, Kootan, Makulavar, Cholathachan, Parambar	Pallavarayan, Manradi, Kamindan, Koundan, Pattakkaran, Pillai	I.Kavilar	SDK.34
29. Anuppapatti Grant	Related to the conferment of the rulership of different localities in Dharapuram Semai on some Pattakkaran perhaps by the Chera king Cheraman Perumal. It is said that some military leaders who had been posted as guards of the fort at Dharapuram deserted the place when they heard that the Chola king was planning to attack the place. These traitors were dismissed and some alternative arrangement was made by the king.	Vellalar, Pillai	Manradiyar, Koundar, Pattakkaran	-	SDK.35
30. Tennilai Grant-1. Collected from M.A.Bhagavathi Koundar, Karur.	This long charter refers to details regarding assignment of land temple privileges, etc., in different villages to many individuals, including, Vellalar, Vettuvur, Brahmana, Uppiliyanayakkar, Thattar, Paraiyar, etc. it is said that copies of this charter were inscribed on the walls of different temples.	Chetty, Vettuva, Thotty, Vellalar, Vanniyar, Brahman, Pandaram, Navithan, Paraiyan, Karuman, Pillai, Thattan, Andi	Koundar, Manradiyar	I. Kirai, Vemban, Mokali, Munnai, Pullai, Ciruthalai, Manthapadai, Venkachi, Paniya, Urumaipadai, Padhari, Poovani, Kannadi, Nariya, Kolli, Veliyan, Sonna, Maniyan Thuvurai Machadi, etc	SDK. 36.

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
31.Tennilai Grant-II. Collected from M.A.Bhagavathi Koundar, Karuru.	Continuation of the previous charter	Vettuva, Chetty, Vellala, Paraiyan, Pandaram, Andi,	Koundan, Pattakaran	I.Ciruthalai, Makali, Venkachi, Mantha, II. Perungudi	SDK.37
32. Allala Ilaiyan Charter	It gives a quasi-historical account of the Vettuvar	Vedar, Vettuvar, Kavular, Puvalar	Koundar	I.Ponnan, Vemba,	SDK.40
33.Madukkarai Charter of Potters. Tamil University, Tanjore.	Records that the Kongu-vellalar of the 24 Nadus brought in a number of potter's families from the Pandiya country and settled them among themselves. The potters (kulalar) were assured of good conduct and all comforts in their new settlements and they in return were asked to supply stipulated number of pots for different occasions in lieu of grain and cash remuneration and other specified privileges and rights. The potters were to supply pots to some other neighbouring communities also. References is also made to their corvee (amanji) obligation for the benefit of officials (duraikal).	Vellalar, Vetkovar, Muppar, Chetty	Koundar	-	SDK.42
34.Charters of the Potter of the 24 Nadus	The Potter of all the twenty-four nadus in Kongu met at Bhavani.	Vetkovar	Pattakarar	-	SDK-43
35.Tirttagiri charter	Records establishment of a Madam named after Tirunilakandar at Tirttagiri by the members of the Kulala (potter) community spread over a wide are. Money contribution and magamai were arranged to be collected from each of their households for the maintenance of the madam.	Thirunilakandar	-	-	SDK-46
36. Charter of the Tirunilakandar Madam	Dated perhaps in the reign of Tirumalai Nayaka. Establishment of a madam near the hill temple at Palani by the Tirunilakandar (potter) community of the twenty-four Nadus. Some taxes from each of the households of that community were earmarked for the maintenance of the institution.	Brahman, Chetty, Vetkovar, Pillai, Nambiyar, Nattuvan	Koundar	-	SDK-48
37.Alaivayamalai charter	Gift of some voluntary contributions to the deity of Guhaiyisvarar on the hill Alaivayamlai (in Rasipuram taluk, Salem Dt) by the Sengunthar by way of thanksgiving, as the deity is said to have helped them in some dispute (Kambalichandai) at Kanchipuram.	Sengunthar	Mudali	-	SDK-50

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
38. Victory Charter of Sengunthar, Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	The 18 th century record narrates a dispute over temple privileges and social honours between <i>idangai</i> and <i>valangai</i> groups at Vijayamangalam. The valangai group comprising the Kavarai Chetty, Devangar and Sanar are said to have illegally claimed some privileges enjoyed by the other group. This led to long-drawn conflict between both the groups for a year or so. On the basis of some old records produced by both the contending parties, the vlangai group misrepresented the facts and so published them with a fine of 24, 000 pon (gold coin). And the <i>idangai</i> group were to pay Rs. 1.500 as a token of gratitude for their victory in the dispute. The present charter recognizing the legal right of the idangai was given in the presence of Tipu's officials, like Amuladar, Srashtadar and Senaboga of many villages and in the presence of the Koundar of the twenty four Nadus, etc. The idangai was composed of the Sengunthar, Padaiyatchi, Asari (Kammala), Nagarattar, Pallar, Mathari, etc.	Chetty, Vellalar, Sengunthar, Iyer, Mathari, Asari, Thachan, Kollar, Mudali, Sanar	Koundar, Pattakkarar, Nayakkan,	-	SDK-51
39. A Palm Leaf Charter about a dispute over caste affiliation. Archaeological Department of Tamil Nadu.	When there arose a dispute whether one Karuppa Mudali of Lingalur belonged to the Mudaliyar caste, some leading members of that caste certified that he is a bona fide member of their caste and thereupon all the nattar and other members of the caste from several villages in Kongu accepted Karuppa Mudali's claim. The chief priest of that caste also first accepted the above resolution but subsequently declined it on complaint from a few other members. This queer behavior of the priest was condemned by the leaders of the caste who reiterated their original resolution and communicated the same to all the Koundar.	Koundar, Mudali	Pattakkarar, Samayamudali, Samukathar, Koundar, Nattar, Urar, Nattanmaikkarar, Periyathanakkarar	-	SDK-52
40. Charter of Morur Kangeyan. Collected from N. Kanthasami, Umayampatti, Rasipuram.	Records that Nallayyan of Sengunthar Caste committed self-immolation by cutting his head praying for the boon of a son to his master, Kangeyan of Morur. In appreciation of this heroic deed, the latter arranged for the worship of the dead hero at Morur and granted some privileges to his descendants. It is said that the privileges were the same as those enjoyed by the <i>idangai</i> communities at Kannivadi, the native place of Kangeyan	Sengunthar, Vanniyar, Chetty	-	-	SDK-54
41. Tirumurugan-pundi charter of the Nadar Community. Collected from the people of Nadar community	Beginning with eulogy of the Nadar community, this charter refers to the decision of the community members to pay some annual contributions to their religious preceptor Anthai Sivasubramaniyar. It also mentions the four chiefs (<i>pattam</i>) of the community.	Nadan, Mukappan	-	-	SDK- 55

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
42. Karumapuram Grant. Collected from Sivasubramanya Panditha Guruswamiyar	Records the charter given by some seven sub-groups of the Nadar caste to their religious preceptor Karunakara Panditar promising his their faithful service. The latter is said to have been performing worship in the Ekambranatha temple at Kanchipuram. A eulogistic account of the community is also given. It is said that once the members of the community even defied the Chola king's orders for compulsory labour (<i>vetti</i>) for raising the breached banks of the Kaveri.	Vellalar, Sanar		-	SDK. 56
43. Charter of the Kanakkan clan. Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	This long record narrates the peregrination of an Agambadiyar group of six brothers under the leadership of Sankaralingaraja from the Madurai area to Darapuram Semai and the final settling of this family in Kodumanal. These people had to leave their original place, to escape the evil designs of their half-brother. They finally took service under Nallanpillai Sarkkarai Manradiyar, the Pattakkarar of Palaiyakottai and in appreciation of their loyal service the latter gave them landed rights in Kodumanal.	Koundar, Akampaiyar, Pandaram,	Koundar	-	SDK.57
44. The victory charter of the Asarimar. Museum of Kalaimakal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode.	When on one occasion the <i>asarimar</i> (artisan) caste of the twenty four nadus was celebrating a marriage, the Chetty community of the Valangai group objected to the use of elephant for wedding procession. The dispute was referred to the palayakkarar Koppa Koundar and Nagama-Nayakkar who finally referred the matter to Kanchipuram. There was at Kanchipuram a copper-plate document which clearly mentioned the <i>idangai</i> people's privilege of using elephant in marriages. The Chetty people had thereupon to pay a huge fine for creating this unnecessary dispute.	Asari, Chetty, Kanakkan, Kollan, Thattan, Kannar	Koundar, Nayakkar	-	SDK.58

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
45. Collected from a priest of Perumal Temple, Kannivadi	A charter given to Venkadasami Iyer the Head of the madam of Adinarayana Perumal temple at Kannivadi, by three groups of Otta Nayakkar (mason caste) under the leadership of Tirumalairaja of Otta Rajakula Tandava Gotra promising the former to pay annually Rs.1/4 per household. It also refers to some social rules of conduct relating to marriage, etc, for the caste members. Widow remarriage is permitted. Finally several members of the caste starting from Tirumalairaja attest to the charter. The signatories hailed from several surrounding villages besides such far-off Andhra villages as Venkatagiri, Kalashati, Tiruppati, Nellur, etc. The family Names are given in their Telugu forms.	Otta Nayakkar, Iyer	Periyathanakkarar	-	
46. Velur Grant. Collected from a Tamil Teacher	This copper plate dated in the reign of the Vijayanagara king Krishnadevaraya bears on one side three low relief panels depicting a magician cum Siddha, a wooden oil press, two bullocks, soldiers armed with weapons, etc. the other side bears the inscription which mentions the bestowal of the title Ayalanaivenra Nattu Kattuvan on the Siddha Chirambalavan, some of Naraloka Siddha of Valavandinadu by the Mudalis)of Elukararinadu and the grant of privileges to ride on Palanquin, etc, and to some cash contributions from all the 98 castes of the idangai group.	Idangai 98 castes, Mudali	-	-	SDK-61
47. Charter of the handicapped children. Collected from S.K. Ramasami Koundar	Records the establishment of an asylum to the Modavandi or handicapped children (abandoned by their parents) by a Tuluva Nayakka at the initiative of a Vijayanagara king who also granted some villages and a sum of 8,000 pon for its maintenance. All the communities in Kongu region, viz., Vellala, Vettuva, Chetty, etc., were to contribute some money fees (varttanai) to the asylum.	Kongu Vettuvar, Kongu Chetty, Kongu Idaiyar, Kongu Pulavar, Kongu Kaviliyar, Kongu Puviliyar, Kongu Sanar, Kongu Kuyavar, Kongu Paraiyar, -	-	-	SDK-62

Name of the Document and Place	Subject	Caste Names and Titles	Power Titles	Clan Names (I).Vettuva (II). Vellala	Ref.
48. Kadaiyur Charter	Dated in the reign of Tirumalai Nayakka of Madurai. This was charter given to the barber called Kangan permitting him barbership rights over some seven villages by the Vellala of Kadaiyur under the leadership of the pattakkarar of that place. This grant was given in appreciation of the help rendered by the barber's father in upholding the honor of the pattakkarar when the latter was threatened by Goppana Koundar, a Vettuva leader of Tenkarai Viracholapura-nadu. It is said that both Goppana Koundar and the pattakkarar were subordinate chiefs to the Nayakka king and when Goppana became disloyal he was punished with the help of the other chief.	Vettuvar, Puluvar, Navithan, Pillai, Thattan, Andi, Thotti	Pattakkarar, Koundar, Manradiyar	II.Seran, Panankadai, Pullan, Venduvan, Kanna, Othala, Porulantha	SDK-63
49. Charter of Perur Dam	Dated in saka 1421, Visvvasu (AD 1499). Records that an official called Kappini Nanjayyan who was entrusted with the work of building a dam at Perur demanded a tax called <i>kandayavari</i> from the four sub castes of Chakkiliar. The tax being oppressive the Chakkiliyar requested all the Kambala Koundar to get them relieved from the tax obligation. The latter excused themselves saying that they could not interfere against the government agency. Finally, Onnappa Koundar of Tenkarai-Nadu represented the case to the king and got the tax removed. The Chakkiliyar reciprocated to this great help by giving a charter to Onnappa Koundar promising him to pay a cash contribution on each of their families.	Chakkiliyar, Mathari,	Koundar, Nattu Koundar, Samukam		SDK-67
50. Charter of Kanna Clan [Katthanganni Grant]	The <i>vellala koundars</i> established their settlement in various parts of Kongu after the meeting of three kings and the rulers of Vijayanagara. Kampanattar helped them in constructing their <i>kula</i> identity. Among the <i>vellalas</i> who migrated from the Chola country, the people of <i>kanna</i> clan settled 16 villages under the leadership Athappa Koundan, Nallana Koundan, Amaravathi Koundan. They had the title of Kannappa Manradiyar. These three had 11 sons who in their time lived separately in different villages. Thus, the people of <i>kanna</i> clan gradually sprouted up in these regions. Now, Thirtha Koundan, a descendant of Sivanthi clan, was not able to find a groom for her daughter since she was not beautiful.	Vellalas, Iyer, Andi, Kongu Chetty	Manradiyar	II. Kanna,sivanthi	SDK-10

	Some <i>vellala</i> grooms ridiculed him when he approached them with marriage proposal. Finally, Senkottu Velappan of <i>kanna</i> clan accepted the proposal but with a condition of transferring the <i>kani</i> rights to him. The transfer of <i>kani</i> rights was witnessed by several people including <i>vellalas</i> of different clans, <i>iyer</i> , <i>andi</i> , <i>kongu chetty</i> , <i>kangeya manradiyar</i> , etc.				
--	--	--	--	--	--

Simple to Complex: A Summary

The purpose of the chapter is not only to give a summation of the discussion held so far but also to respond to the assumptions and questions raised in the introduction. In the first chapter, we began with synthesizing various scholarly views on evolution of state and the caste stratification. It enabled us to situate the study in a specific theoretical premise. It was assumed that an enquiry into the sociopolitical transformation of a peripheral region, with the help of evolutionary approach, might provide meaningful insights to the ongoing discussion particularly on the nature of state and society in India.

Being on a periphery of all 'historical nuclear regions' of south India and having a marginalized representation in the mainstream historical discourses, the Kongu region has offered an experimental case for this study. This region, comprised of four modern districts namely Coimbatore, Salem, Namakkal, Erode and some parts of other bordering districts, retains its unique identity right from the beginning of the historic period. Surrounded by a number of hills ranges, the early history of the region seems to be a history of various segmented pastoral tribes under various chieftainships. Despite the fact that there are tangible evidences to the presence of agriculture, the agrarian production and related social institutions did not develop to the extent of sustaining political unification under a single leadership. On the other hand, due to its strategic location, it had been a nodal place for trade and traders' activities. Its linkage with the early Roman trade is worth mentioning. The region was open to cultural contacts and diffusions from different parts of south India. Hunters, pastoral people, traders, peasants, artisans, brahmans, etc., had migrated to the region and treated it as their homeland in different junctures of history. During the medieval period, with the large-scale establishment of peasant settlements, the region gained its distinctive cultural identity.

The collaborative analysis of megalithic burial-cum-habitation remains and classical Tamil literatures gave fair insights to the early inhabitants of the regions. Different categories of iron tools, unearthed from megalithic burials and the literary glorifications on heroism, warfare and hunting expeditions, indicate the dominance of a hunting-pastoral subsistence economy and a sort of political unification, which was neither tribal nor a full-fledged state. The ideology of heroism, kin labour, communal production, tribal beliefs and ritual practices, etc., characterized the contemporary social formation.

There were three phases of human settlement during the classical period. Wandering tribes such as *kurumbar*, *eyiner*, *kosar*, *vedar*, *kongar*, etc, were early settlers. During this phase, the chiefdom level of political formation was yet to develop since these tribes were semi-nomadic and kept themselves in constant movement. The period of seven philanthropist chiefs like Ori, Adiyaman, etc., marks the second stage. These chiefs were often engaged in either hunting or plunder expedition, in addition to the usual inter tribal warfare. During the third stage, the heroic obsessions was gradually reduced but not completely waned. This was the period of the chiefs like Kumanan, Nannan, Perunkuni, etc.

The titles such as *ko*, *vel*, *perumagan*, *kilar*, etc., signified the power of the chiefs. The social stratification at this level was presumably based on chiefs and kinsmen and youngsters and elders. The chiefs played some sort of managerial role by redistributing the surplus mainly acquired through plunder, feast and gift-giving, controlling trade affairs and thus brought about the flow of prestigious goods to the local community. Presumably, the chiefs could enjoy their leadership as long as they could get support from the kinsmen. They relatively possessed a superior power positions and greater access to food, valuables, and women. They consciously maintained their high status through various means displaying plentitude of goods and exhibiting their heroic talents and skills. Though attempts were made to intervene into the subsistence activity of kinsmen, the economy was yet to be centralized. The local communities still retained their autonomy over basic subsistence resources without being economically dependant on any individual.

By the end of the classical period, the plain regions of south India witnessed significant structural changes in its socio-political formation, i.e., the dissolution of early chiefdoms into the State. With the establishment of two relatively powerful dynasties, the Pallavas and the Pandiyas, a certain degree of political and economic centralization was achieved particularly by extending control over the subsistence activities. But when these plain regions underwent drastic transition in all aspects of its socioeconomic and political formation, the bordering regions such as the Kongu not only remained incommensurate, but inversely developed into a structural form in which certain features of heroic age- cattle raiding, hunting, hero-worship, etc., became more prominent.

The herostone inscriptions of this period reveal a well-rooted pastoralism in all aspects of social life. The heroes depicted in the herostones were locally influential

persons, belonging to segments of society, segmented lineage, community or a family group. Most of them are either servants or soldiers and rarely kings or chiefs. They have been honored for their heroism in local skirmishes, cattle raiding, hunting on small scale, etc. Wealth of a person or a tribe group was determined on the basis of the number of the cattle owned. The cattle could have been used as currency for the purpose of exchange. Cattle in the hero stones are identified by different names *thoru*, *nirai*, *kali*, *pon*, etc. Similarly, rich cattle breeders were identified as *ponnandiar*, *ponmothanar* and *porkovanar*. *Thoruppusal* is referred to mean the fight over cattle. All these development indicate the spread of heroic ideology even to the lower stratum of the society. Tribe names like *athiar*, *vadugar* and *vettuvar* are mentioned. Among these early tribes the *vettuva*, which had a substantial population, emerged as a powerful tribe and perhaps all other marginalized tribes would have become part and subunits of the *vettuva* tribe. Towards the tenth century CE, a section of *vettuva* tribe would have transformed as a full time agriculturalist.

Despite this incommensurate process, society did not remain static. But the contemporary developments were not strong enough to sustain the components of agrarian sector dominated state society. In addition to the agro-pastoral subsistence economy, the ceaseless warfare and strong tribal affinity provided less possibility for any kind of political unification. In a way, these developments can be called as complex chiefdoms with different operational levels. Within the chiefdom, power was operated at least two levels. And when these chiefs tried to establish their contacts with the rulers of the neighbouring states, a third level of political centre came into being. Titles such as *araisar*, *athiaraisar*, *mutharaiyar*, *ilavaraisar*, *parumaraisar*, *parumar*, *palasiriyar*, *perman*, etc indicate the power and status of the chiefs. Among them *athiaraisar*, *ilavaraisar*, and *parumaraisar* were the highest level power holders. They were the chiefs of the segment units of certain major ethnic units. Each group maintained its own local lineage attached to one common ancestor or connecting to powerful chiefs or kings. The *panar*, *kadavas*, *adiyamans*, *nolambas*, *mutharaiars*, and several others were the chiefs who come under the second category. They represented a larger ethnic group within which there were several segmented lineage units under the dominance of local chiefs. They were generally identified in the herostones with the titles such as *mutharaiar*, *peruman*, *parumar*, *araisar*, etc. They would have played some sort of managerial role by controlling the subunits, but their economic intervention in the local subsistence

activities was very less or absent since the economic practices were heavily depended on agro-pastoral way of production in which even the local chiefs did not have much role to play. They tried to adopt the state models developed in the plain regions like that of the Pallavas and the Gangas. They also bore titles of these rulers. For example, *paruman*, *varman*, etc., were the titles of the Pallava rulers, which were largely adopted by them.

During the 10th to 13th century, there emerged a clear-cut division of the ruler and the ruled. A network of composite ruling class comprised of wealthy landlords, merchants and brahmins began to dominate the entire socioeconomic and political sphere of the stage. The substantial surplus in agrarian production facilitated a few to do away with the production activity, to take up managerial positions and to gain unequal share in the surplus production. As a result of this process, there emerged a class of wealthy landlords who soon gained political power leading to the formation of the ruling class. The contacts with the regions of historical process, helped the ruling class to evolve a systematic political mechanism to subtract the surplus initially from the peasant community and later from almost all occupational groups. With regular flow of income in favour of the ruling classes, the relations of production were systematized. The surplus was extracted from the primary producer in the form of revenues and duties. Another outcome of agrarian surplus was the emergence of a class of traders initially from the landowning peasant community. With their connection with the rural peasant elite as well as with traders of other regions, the merchants were able to accumulate enormous wealth, which became a basis for their political power. The radical structural changes in the mode of production and the consequent emergence of productive forces and social relations production required certain religious ideological formulations in order to legitimise the existence of the ruling class and their hegemony over the primary producers. It facilitated the brahmins to become a part of the composite ruling class. With all these internal developments, the formation of the state in the Kongu region became viable.

The already developed state, such as the Cholas and the Pandiyas provided external impetus to the development of state within the region. The model of power structure and the institutions of state apparatus which were derived from these states helped the regional rulers to bring the local landowning and merchant elite groups under their control. The regional rulers began to adopt the titles and dynastic names of the Cholas and the Pandiyas. With the large-scale temple construction, facilitating brahman

settlements and generous donation in the form of land to brahmins and the temple, the regional rulers were able to strengthen their power among the local level rulers. The claim of the share by the state over the production was legitimized with the support of state religion rather than cohesive forces.

At the local level, the members of the composite ruling class, in order to strengthen their hegemony over the primary producers, followed the same mechanism of legitimization. By using long titles, showing proximity with the powerful regional rulers and contributing to the local religious institutions, the local ruling elites were able to manipulate their power and thus provided basis for the entire power structure of the state. The process of state formation in Kongu reached its full-fledged shape during the rule of Veera Rajendra Chola of Konatan family, who unified two ancient divisions of Kongu, the *vada kongu* and *ten kongu*.

From the 14th century onwards, there were migrations in large scale to the Kongu region. It led to enormous structural changes in the existing social settlement. The caste, for the first time, became a major factor in determining social hierarchy and rank. There was a fusion of brahmanical high culture and local folk traditions leading to the development a unique regional culture. Most parts of the region witnessed the settlement of *kongu vellalars*, who later became known as *kongu vellalar koundars*. There were several instances of land transactions from early inhabitants to new *kongu vellalars*. Agrarian expansion reached its zenith creating a land based social hierarchical system. The previously power titles such *koundar*, *chetty*, *mudali*, etc., became caste titles or caste name itself. Another significant aspects are the upward mobility and the growing competition among the castes. Each caste began to bargain for its social rights and privileges. Functioning more like a guild or organization, the castes constructed their own behavior rules and interaction mechanism. Tension arose when some castes tried to challenge the existing taboos. The best example was the fight between *kaikolars* and *chetty* on certain social rights. If the role of a caste is vital and necessary to the dominant caste, upliftment of a lower caste in the hierarchy is unavoidable. Consequently, there would be structural adjustment in power sharing among the higher castes. The adjustment of *kongu vellalars* with other alien castes can be seen in this light. There is regional variation in the caste hierarchy and same caste titles have been used by different castes. As a sign of mobility, caste began to construct their own mythological history, often connecting with the mythology of certain powerful castes. For example,

the mythological history of *kongu vellalar*, *vettuva*, *vetkovar*, *kaikolar*, etc has certain interconnected events. And the mythology often reflected the social reality and the positions and relation of relevant castes. Now a new section of rulers emerged from below. The power suggestive titles such as *pallavarayar*, *manradiyar*, *uthama kamintan*, *ur koundan*, *nattukkoundan*, *pattakaran*, etc signified the section.

Having briefly explained the major arguments in each chapter, now, I would like to highlight upon certain points as a way of concluding the study.

1. The process of state formation: The societal development and the formation of state in south India has not yet been studied in terms of process. Most of the scholarly works in this regard concentrate upon the more sophisticated area of the Chola state in the Kaveri region. Therefore, they were able to analyze the structural nuances of the state rather than the various aspects of the process. Further, the existing studies do not adequately explain the linkage between the social formation in the classical period and that in the Pallava and Chola period. Few studies have attempted to characterize the nature of transition, but they tend to give a rather generalized view. For instance, on the basis of the references drawn from classical Tamil literature, the social formation in the early Tamilakam is generally viewed as semi-tribal or chiefdom. The ideology of heroism, tribal warfare, delight in hunting, kin-labour, communal holding, etc., are studied as its major characteristics. Yet some believe that these literatures composed as a specialized category of *panar* and *pulavar*, give a one-sided view of the contemporary society. The peasantry and their institutions in particular are said to have marginal representation in the heroic poems. In fact, most of the attributes of the classical society disintegrated and began to disappear in several places at the end of classical age. At the same time, they were further strengthened and continued up to post-classical period in other places. If we analyze the early literatures, a good number of songs have been composed for the heroes from hilly regions like Kongu. And these songs have been often cited to characterize the heroic society of entire early Tamilakam. But for the post-classical period, the agrarian centric plain regions come to the central place. Here, the development of peasantry and agrarian institutions in the plain regions, which were under the control of *ventar* chiefs in particular during the heroic period and the continuation of the attributes of heroic society in the hilly regions like Kongu during the post-classical period have marginal representation in the contemporary records of respective period. Therefore, simple unilinear way of transition may not be applicable

even within a region like Tamilakam. One needs to look for the roots of various historical processes, which made their presence known more vividly during the Middle Ages. If such basis of historical development of ecologically varying (sub) regions were distinguishable, then it would provide a much clearer analytical framework. In fact, it would enrich our understanding of regional history as a whole.

2. Transition in the lower and upper strata of society: One of the significant observations that can be made out of the study is the variation in nature and time-frame of transition in the lower and upper stratum of society. For instance, we have analyzed how the elements of heroic society penetrated into the lower stratum and were practiced by commoners during the post classical period. The heroes, who were glorified in the classical literatures, were chiefs and tribal leaders, whereas the herostone heroes were generally from the common people. The society discussed in the light of inscriptions belonging to the period from the 10th to 13th century and that in the social documents of 14th to 16th century can also be interpreted in this direction. The new socioeconomic and cultural developments seen in the inscriptions can probably be ascribed to the upper stratum. The social documents show how these new ideas and socio-cultural intuitions were perceived and adopted by the people at the bottom of the social ladder. Now, characterizing the social developments with the help of certain generic terms in particular time and space seems to be problematic.

3. Applicability of theoretical models: The applicability of various theoretical models to study the developments in peripheral regions is another question, which needs to be addressed against the empirical data. In this case, the Kongu region has been a unitary part of the state in the 'unitary state' model envisaged by Nilakanda Sastri. In Burton Stein's approach, they were clusters of independent peripheral segments, over which the political authority of the State (Chola) was minimal, where it exercised a sort of ritual authority. According to the characterization of south Indian feudalism, the chiefs in bordering and peripheral regions had feudal relations with the central state in the Kaveri regions. Further, they were once unitary part of the single political unification (state) before they were fragmented into several units on account of various factors. The problem in such approaches is their hold in certain nuclear regions and viewing the periphery from there. As a result, the local historical process and consequent changes at sub-regional level is being neglected. Moreover, if the state is a product of relevant changes in the social and economic formation, most of the peripheral regions exhibit

incompatible socio-economic development, which precludes them from being seen to be part of the 'state' that existed in the core regions. In some cases, these regions exhibit a compatible socio-economic development, but without being part of any single political set-up or state. Now, certain blanket theoretical models become invalid in case of the historical experiences at the periphery.

4. Mobility from below: Mobility or immobility is another contested area in Indian historical writing. An interesting aspect in the entire course of discussion in this study is that we have seen how certain people were able to gain economic and political strength and power and had become part of the ruling class. The tribal chiefs, rich cattle breeders, the heroes who exhibited bravery at different juncture, traders, big landholders, artisans, etc achieved higher position in society and enjoyed more power and privileges in different points of history. We came across inscriptional charts that conferred certain special rights to brahman priests, *kammala*, artisans, etc. The people like *kaikolars*, *devaradiyars*, etc, who settled in temple *thirumadaivilakam* were granted certain special privileges. Healer, *devadasies*, labours and similar other individuals including brahmans were given land and thus they became *kaniyalar*. In light of a copper plate (social document), when *vetkovar* settled in the Kongu regions, they negotiated with the *kongu vellalars* for their social rights. Power titles such as *koundars*, *chetty* and *mudhalies* were later adopted by entire kinsmen signifying the mobility of the entire caste. A person, who had adopted titles such *vellala* and *mudali*, had personal name—*paraiyan* *paraiyan*. *Paraiyan* was name of a lower caste. Moreover, during the medieval period the castes, particularly those that were in the middle order, began to construct their mythological history connecting their origin with great tradition. All these references indicate the unrest and mobility from below. It happened in many ways at individual and community levels. In fact, there is a lot more that is yet to be explored in this regard.

5. Evolution of titleholders: It is also significant to note the evolution of power titles in different stages of history. *Ko*, *vel* and *perumagan* during the classical period, *araisar*, *athiarisar*, *gagathiarisar*, *ilavarisar*, *paruman*, *varman*, *pallavariyar*, etc from the herostones, *rayan*, *ariayan*, *pallavaraiyan*, *brahmarayan*, *koundan*, *kamintan*, *muventavelan*, *alvan*, *periyannattu muventalvelan*, *velan*, *manradi*, etc., from inscriptional records and *manradiyar*, *pallavarayan*, *uthama kamintan*, *pattakaran*, *ur koundan*, *nattuk koundan*, etc., were power holders in the respective period. They emerged as a ruling class and exercised enormous authority at the local level. Most of

them seem to have evolved from local community and soon widened their distance from the fellow kinsmen.

6. Brahmanical settlement and agrarian expansion: There is a tendency among the historians of south India to treat *brahmadeya* as a signifier of agrarian expansion and state control. For example, in view of R.Champakalakshmi, the *brahamadya* 'owed its existence and loyalty to the kings who created and patronized it and not to the *nadu*'. And they 'were harbingers of advanced farming methods—irrigation, management of resources and means of production'. According to Rajan Gurukkal, '...growing number of Brahman households was an important phenomenon, for it meant that the progressive disintegration of the system of productive relations based kinship on the one hand and the corresponding emergence of an alternative system with the potential to evolve from within...'. This generic view about agrarian expansion and emergence of non-kin labour and social stratification does not hold validity in case of uplands like Kongu. Here, the references to brahmanical institutions such *brahamadeya*, *saturvedimangalam*, *taniyur*, etc are relatively less. Yet, most of these institutions were established in highly fertile areas, which already had access to water reservoirs. According to the contemporary inscriptions, several *saturvedimangalam* were established and supported by local rulers and *nattars*. For instance, Nalludaiyappa Mudhali of Tharamangalam established *Lakshmana saturvedimangalam*. *Muppa Samutra Saturvedimangalam* had received village and land from *nattars* of different *nadu*. The land given to *Lakshmana satuvedimanglathu pattar* by Veerachola Poovaniya *nattar* had access to water resources of several *eri* (lake). An inscription registers *saturvedimangalathu nattar*'s (*nattar* of *saturvedimangalam*) donation to the temple. All these references indicate that it is not in all cases that the brahmanical institutions were under direct control of the King or the state. Similarly, according to some social documents, after settling down in 24 *nadus* of Kongu, the *kongu vellalars* arranged the establishment of brahman settlement in each *nadus*. The agrarian expansion in Kongu occurred in large scale during the medieval period with or without the support of the rulers. The expansion of brahman settlements in many cases seems to have legitimized the political authority of the ruler both at the central and local levels and can be seen as a means to bring already-developed agrarian zones into a state system. The process of clearing forests and establishing peasant settlements went on upto the early modern period. The migrant peasants, who were already acquainted with brahminical ideology

and lived in a hierarchical social setup, were able to easily subordinate the local tribes. Constructing a temple and bringing a brahman family to the village were conventionally followed in such peasant settlements. This helped the peasants to ensure their supremacy in the newly settled areas. Even in the semi-tribal forests and hilly regions, supporting brahmans or adopting brahminical ideology and their way of life helped the local military chiefs and land lords to maintain their social distance and to ensure the social hierarchy that emerged with the expansion of agriculture. The brahman landowner and the emergence of non-kin labour and social stratification also deserve a detailed analysis. In several anthropological and archaeological studies, metalworking is considered as the starting point for the development of productive forces and social division of labour.

7. Pattern of landholding and village communities: Finally, the landholding pattern of medieval Kongu needs to be discussed. Until recent times, it was considered that only the communal landholding was prevalent in precolonial south India. Some inscriptional-based studies on certain *brahmadeya* villages challenged the perceptions by giving empirical evidences. It was further extended to non-*brahmadeya* settlements by Noboru Karashima's microscopic survey. The table-5 in the fifth chapter of the study reflects upon the nature of land transactions. Evidently, the private rights over agricultural tracts were gradually expanding in medieval Kongu. The land was circulated among the landlords, chiefs, temples and the state functionaries. And now and then, it reached out to the hands of other groups like, *kaikolar*, *devaradiyars*, medical practitioners, gardeners, etc. The forest and dry lands were given to the individuals. Otherwise people without any proper official sanctions might have occupied these tracts. But, still various aspects of non-brahman villages have not yet been effectively studied. Ownership over several villages by a landlord would mean his right to collect a share of production from the cultivators. Viewed from the perspective of the cultivators, they might appear as the owners of the land in which they were engaged in tilling. They could increase their landed property by clearing forest and bringing virgin land under cultivation, but for this they had to pay the due share to the landlords or landholders. Therefore even in the non-brahman villages, every family or extended family could be considered as a production unit, which exercised authority to cultivate a particular tract of land. To most of these local producers, their immediate authorities, i.e., the assemblies or chiefs appeared like the state. As long as they were able to pay the revenue, they could retain their right to

cultivation. Within the primary producers there would have been transfer and exchange of land rights, with or without the knowledge of the landlord or any other superior authority. One cannot expect its appearance in the inscriptions since their purpose was to serve something different. But their rights over land was uncertain and anytime it could be taken from the cultivators. According to some inscription, even some brahmans, who were conferred private rights over certain pieces of lands were threatened with the loss of their rights by the order of the state or local assemblies.

Bibliography

1. Tamil Classical Literature

- Ainkurunuru*, U.V.Saminathier (ed.) with Tamil commentary, U.V.Saminathier Publication, Madras, 1980.
- Akananuru*, Venkatacaminattar and Venkatachalam Pillai (eds.), vols I&II, 3rd edition, vol.III, 2nd edition, South Indian Saiva Siddhanta Works, Tirunelveli, 1951-4.
- Kuruntokai*, P.V.Comacuntaranar (with commentary), South Indian Saiva Siddhanta Works, Tirunelveli, 1978.
- Narrinai*, A. Narayanacami Aiyar (with Commentary) and P.V.Comacutarnar (with supplementary commentary), South Indian Saiva Siddhanta Works, Tirunelveli, 1976.
- Pattupattu*, U.V.Saminathier (ed.), (with Naccinarkkiniyar's commentary), Tanjore Tamil University, Tanjore, 1961.
- Purananuru Mulamum Uraiyum*, Notes by U.V. Swaminathaier, Kapir Accukkutam, Madras, 1963.

2. Herostones

- Avanam*, issue nos. 4&7, Journal of the Tamil Nadu, State Archaeological Society, 1994.
- Nadukarkkal* (Herostones), compiled S.Krishnamurthi, Meyyappan Pathippakam, Chidambaram, 2004.

3. Inscriptions

- Coimbatore Mavatta Kalvettukkal*, Thokuthi.1 (Inscriptions of Coimbatore District vol.1) (ed.), T.Srithar, State Department of Archaeology, Chennai, 2006.
- Coimbatore Mavatta Kalvettukkal*, Thokuthi.2 (Inscriptions of Coimbatore District vol.2), (ed.), Sitharama Gurumurthi, State Department of Archaeology, Chennai, 2006.
- Epigraphia Indica*, Vols,X, XII, XXX &XLII, (ed.), D.C.Sircar and K.V.Ramesh.
- Erode Mavatta Kalvettukkal*, Thokuthi-1 (Inscriptions of Erode District vol.1), (ed.), Sitharama Gurumurthi, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 2007.
- Kalvettu*, issue no. 66, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 2005.
- Salem-Namakkal Mavattak Kalvettukkal* (Inscriptions of Salem and Namakkal Districts), (ed.), A.Krittinan, Tamil University, Tanjore, 2001.
- South Indian Inscriptions* (Relevant Volumes) (eds.), G.V.Srinivasa Rao, K.G.Krishnan and H.Krishna Sastri.
- Tamizhakach Cheppedukal*, Thokuthi.1 (Copper Plates of Tamil Nadu), (ed.), T.Srithar, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 2005.

4. Traditions, Manuscripts and Social Documents

Colanpurvapattiyam, Government Oriental Mass. Series, no.5, 1950.

Elder Brothers' Story (on Oral Epic of Tamil), collected and Translated by Brenda E.F.Beck, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras, 1992.

Kaliyannar Pulavar Iyarriya Poondurai Puranam (Poondurai Puranam of Kaliyannar Pulavar), (ed.), Se. Rasu and K. Arangasami, Sarma Sandoriyam Press, Pudhukottai,.

Kongu Desa Rajakkal, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai, 1950.

Kongu Mandala Varalarukal (Histories of Kongu Mandalam), (ed.), S. Soundrapandiyan and Natana Kasinathan, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Chennai, 1997.

Kongumandala Sathakam, (ed.), Muthusami Konar, 1923.

Kongunattu Samuka Avanankal (Social Documents of Kongu), (ed.), Se. Rasu, Tamil University, Tanjore.

Pazhaya Kottai Pattakarar Nattup Padalum Poorva Pattayamum (Folk Traditions about Pazhaya Kottai Pattakarar and the Charter of Poorva), (ed.), K. Arunachala Koundar, Shanmugam Press, Chennai, 1965.

5. Manuals and Gazetteers

A Manual of The Salem District in the Presidency of Madras, compiled by H. Le Fanue, Tamilnadu Archives, Government of Tamilnadu, Egmore, 1883.

A Manual of the Trichinopoly District in the Presidency of Madras, compiled by Lewis Moore, Madras, 1878.

Madras District Gazetteers, Coimbatore, compiled by B.S.Baliga, Government of Madras, 1866.

Madras District Gazetteers, Salem, (ed.), F.J.Richards, Government Press, 1919.

6. Works in Tamil

Anbarasu, P., *Athiyamankal Varalaru* (History of Adiyamans), Vijaya Pathippakam, Salem, 1998.

Appadurai, K., *Kongu Thamizhaka Varalaru* (History of Kongu Thamizhakam), Thamizhman Pathippakam, Chennai, 2002.

Chinnaswamy, *Kongu Vellalar*, Erode, Tamilan Press, 1963.

Gandhi, Marxiya., *Thamizhaka Varalarril Adhiyar Marabu* (Adhiyar Tradition in Tamil History), Amuthan Pathippakam, Chennai, 2001.

- Goauthaman, N., *Sulur Varalaru* (History of Sulur), Paventhar Peravai, Coimbatore, 1995.
- Gurumurthi, Sitharam., (ed.), *Dindugal Mavatta Tholliyal Kaiyedu* (Archaeological Hand-Book of Dindugal District, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 2007.
- Jayaraman, N. and R. Chandrasekaran (eds.), *Kongunattiyal*, Seminar Papers, Bharathiyar University, Coimbatore, 1978.
- Kaudhaman, Raj, *Pattum Thokaiyum Tholkappiyamum: Tamizh Samuka Uruvakkam*, Thamizhini, 2006.
- Kovaikizhar, *Kongu Nadum Samanamum*, (Kongu Nadu and Jainism), Kovai Nilaya Pathipakam, Coimbatore, 1953.
- Krishnasami, P., *Kongunattu Varalarum Annamar Vazhipadum* (History of Kongunadu and Annamar worship), Thannane Publishers, Bangalore, 1998.
- Kritinasamy, K., *Kootamum Thirumanamum* (Clans and weddings), Makkal Veliyeedu, Chennai, 1983.
- Lakshmi Narayanan, Ya., *Kongu Nattu Varalaru* (History of Kongu Nadu), Star Publications, Madras, 1996.
- Leela, S., *Annamar Swami Kadhai* vols. I&II, (The Story of Annamar Swami), Thamizhman Nilayam, Chennai, 1999.
- Manikkam, V., *Kongu Nadu (upto.1400 AD)*, Makkal Veliyeedu, Chennai, 2001.
- Muthusami, K.N., *Annamar Jati Kadhai or Panmuka Parvai* (A multi-faceted view on Annamar Jati Story), Perur Pulavar Peravai, Perur, 2002.
- Nachimuthu, K., *Cholan Poorva Pattayam Koorum Kongu Nattu Urkal*, (The Place Names of Kongu Nadu in Cholan Poorva Pattayam), Jayakumar Stores, Nagerkovil, 1970.
- Nagasamy, R., ‘Undi Koduththor Uyir Koduththore’, in Pulavar Maniyan, *Varalarril Velan Kudikal* (Velan Communities in History), Kathiravan Achakam, Chennai, 1991.
- Nagaswamy, R., (ed.), *Chengam Nadukarkal*, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1978.
- Natarajan, Nal., *Kongu Velalar Varalaru* (The History of Kongu Velalar), Pallavi Pathipakam, Erode, 2001.
- Pallaniyappan, *Kodainalam Padaitha Kurunila Mannarkal* (Philanthropist Chiefs), Ramu Nilayam, Chennai, 1997.
- Pathmavathi, P., ‘Velalar Kudipeyarchi’ (Migration of Velalar), in Pulavar Maniyan, *Varalarril Velan Kudikal* (Velan Communities in History), Kathiravan Achakam, Chennai, 1991.

- Poongunran, R., *Tholkudi, Velir, Arasial: Cangam Nadukarkkal or Ayvu* (Tribe, Velir, Politics: A Study on Cangam Herostones), Pudhumalar Pathippakam, Coimbatore, 2001.
- Poongunran, R., *Perur*, State Archaeological Department, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 1979.
- Raghava Iyenkar, M., *Velir Varalaru* (The History of Velir), Valluvar Pannai, Chennai, 1964.
- Rajan, K., *Kodumanal Akazhayvu* (Kodumanal Excavation), Tanjore, Mano Pathippakam, 1994.
- Ramamurthi, V., *Kongu Nattu Koundarkal* (Koundars of Kongu Nadu), Lotus Publishing Company, Tiruchirappalli, 1977.
- Rasu, Se., *Alampadi Porul Thantha Kula Varalaru*, Pudhukottai, 1993.
- Rasu, Se., and R. Duraisami (eds.), *Paruthipalli Cellankootam Kongu Nattu Vellalar Varalaru* (History of Paruthipalli Cellan Clan of Kongu Nattu Velalar), Paruthipalli Cellankootam Kongu Natuvelalar Arakkattalai, Paruthippalli, 2007.
- Rasu, Se., *Appiyapalayam Perunkudi Kula Varalaru* (History of Appiyapalayam Perunkudi Clan), Kongu Ayvu Mayyam, Erode, 2000.
- Rasu, Se., *Kathankanni Ventuvakula Varalaru* (History of Kathankanni Ventuva Clan), Erode, 1998.
- Rasu, Se., *Keeranur Kaniyalarkal Varalaru* (History of Keeranur Landholders), Kongu Ayvu Mayyam, Tanjore, 1993.
- Rasu, Se., *Kongunadum Samanamum* (Kongu Nadu and Jainism), Kongu Ayvu Mayyam, Erode, 2005.
- Rasu, Se., *Konkoor Venduvankula Varalaru* (History of Konkoor Venduvan Clan), Kongu Ayvu Mayyam, Erode, 1999.
- Rasu, Se., *Murunkath Thozhuvu Periyakula Varalaru* (History of Murnkath Thozhuvu Periyakulam), Erode, 1989.
- Rasu, Se., *Vellodu Kaniyalar Varalaru* (History of Vellodu Landholders), Vellodu, 2007.
- Santhalinkam, S., *Varalarril Thakadur* (Thakadur in History), Thakadur Mavatta Varalarrup Peravai, Dharmapuri, 1990.
- Selvaraj, K., *Jambai- Or Ayvu* (Jambai- A Study), State Archaeological Department, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 2005.
- Shanmugasundaram, Ka., *Sanga Kala Velirkal* (Velirs of Sangam Period), P.Kandhasami Nayakar Kalvi Arakkattalai, Chennai, 1997.
- Shanmugasundaram, S., *Kongu Nattupura Ilakkiyam* (Folk Literatures of Kongu), Kavya Pathippakam, 1992.
- Shanmugasundaram, S., *Kongu Nattupura Iyal* (Kongu Folklore), Thannanaane Pathippakam, Bangalore, 2001.

- Srithar, T (ed.), *Coimbatore Mavatta Tholliyal Kaiyedu* (Hand-Book of Archaeology of Coimbatore District), State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 2005.
- Subramaniyan, C., *Kongu Nattu Mangala Vazhthuppadal* (Marriage Songs of Kongu Nadu), Thannanaane Publication, Bangalore, 1997.
- Tamizhnadan, *Tharamangalam Ketty Mudali Arasarkal* (Rulers of Tharamangalam Ketty Mudhali), The Salem Committee for the Survey of Historical Records, Tharamangalam, 1988.
- Thankamani, Rajasekara., 'Namakkal Mavattathil Vettuvār' (Vettuvār in Namakkal District), in Kavingar. Tamilnadan (ed.), *Salem Mavattam Sila Ayvukal* (Studies on Salem District), Kavya Pathippakam, Bangalore, 1988.
- Thankamani, Rajasekara., *Kongil Vettuvār* (Vettuvār in Kongu) {*Avanam Karutharanku Malar*} [Avanam Seminar Papers], State Archaeological Society, Tamilnadu, Thanjavur.
- Vadivelan, R., *Kongu Nattupura Ilakkiyam* (Folk Literatures of Kongu), Arunothayam, Chennai, 2003.
- Venkatasamy, Mayilai Seeni., *Kongu Nattu Varalaru* (History of Kongu Nadu), New Century Book House, Chennai, 1974.
- Venkatasamy, Mayilai Seeni., *Kongunadum Thulunadum* (Kongunadu and Thulunadu), Vasanth Pathippakam, Chennai, 2001.

7. Selected Books and Articles in English

- Aberle, Kathleen Gough., 'Criteria of Caste Ranking in South India', *Man in India*, vol. 39, 1959.
- Abraham, M., 'A Medieval Merchant Guild of South India', *Studies in History*, vol. IV, no. 1, 1982.
- Abraham, M., *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1988.
- Abrahamson, Mark, 'Correlates of Political Complexity', *American Sociological Review*, vol.34, no.5, 1969.
- Altekar, A.S., *State and Government in Ancient India*, Motilal Banarsidass, 1st ed. Varanasi, 1949.
- Antonaccio, Carla M., 'Contesting the Past: Hero Cults, Tomb Cult, and Epic in Early Greece', in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. XCVIII, No. 3, 1994.
- Appadorai, A., *Economic Conditions in Southern India (1000-1500 A.D)*, vol.I & 2, Madras, 1936.
- Appadurai, Arjun, 'Right and Left Hand Castes in South India', *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol.II, 1974.

- Arangasamy, K., and J. Bharathi (ed.), *Poligars and Pattagarers*, Society of South Indian History, Salem, 1983.
- Aravamuthan, T.G., 'A Pandyan Issue of Punchmarked Coins', *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. VI, (pt. 1), 1944.
- Arokiaswamy, A., *The Kongu Country*, University of Madras, 1956.
- Beck, Brenda E F, (ed.), *Perspectives on a Regional Culture*, Vikash Publishing House, New Delhi, 1980.
- Beck, Brenda E.F., 'The Right-Left Division of South Indian Society', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol.29, no.4, 1970.
- Beck, Brenda E.F., *Peasant Society in Konku*, University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1972.
- Berreman, Gerald D., 'Caste as Social Process', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, vol.23, no.4, 1967.
- Berreman, Gerald D., 'Caste in India and the United States', *The American Journal of Sociology*, vol.66, no.2, 1960.
- Berreman, Gerald D., 'The Brahminical View of Caste', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, No.5, 1972.
- Berreman, Gerald D., 'The Study of Caste Ranking in India,' *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, vol.21, 1965.
- Blackburn, Stuart H., 'The Folk Hero and Class Interest in Tamil Heroic Ballads', *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, 1978.
- Bloch, Marc, *French Rural History: an Essay on its Basic Characteristics*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966.
- Brenner, Robert, 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe', *Past and Present*, no.70, 1976.
- Carneiro, Robert, 'A Theory of the Origin of the State,' *Science, New series*, vol-169, no.3947, August 1970.
- Champakalakshmi, R., 'Archaeology and Tamil Literary Tradition', *Puratattva (Archaeological Society of India)*, VIII, 1975-6.
- Champakalakshmi, R., 'State and Economy: South India Circa A.D.400-1300' in Romila Thapar (ed), *Recent Perspectives of Early Indian History*, Popular Prakasan, Bombay, 1995.
- Champakalakshmi, R., Book review article on Burton Stein's 'Peasant State Society in Medieval south India', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1982.
- Champakalakshmi, R., *Trade, Ideology and Urbanization: South India 300 BC to 1300*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1996.

- Chattopadhyaya, B.D., *Aspects of Rural Settlements and Rural Society in Early Medieval India*, S.G.Deuskar Lectures on Indian History and Culture, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, 1990.
- Chattopadhyaya, B.D., *Coins and Currency Systems in South India*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1977.
- Chattopadhyaya, B.D., *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994.
- Chodak, Szymon., 'The Birth of an African Peasantry', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1971.
- Claessen, Henri J.M. and Peter Skalnik, (eds.), *The Study of the State*, Mouton, New York, 1981.
- Cohen, Ronald and Elman R.Service, (ed.), *Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution*, Institute of the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia, 1978.
- Coldstream, N, 'Hero-Cults in the Age of Homer', *Journal of Historical Studies*, Vol. XCVI, 1976.
- Cramer, Winifred and Jonathan Hass, 'Tribe Versus Chiefdom in Lower Central America,' *American Antiquity*, vol.50, no.4, 1985.
- Curtin, Philip D., *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984.
- Damodaran, K., (ed.), *Tamil Nadu: Archaeological Perspective*, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 1999.
- Dange, S.A, *India from Primitive Communism to Slavery*, 1st ed., Delhi, 1949.
- Desai, P.B., *Jainism in South India and Some Jaina Epigraphs*, Sholapur, 1957.
- Dougherty, C. and L. Kurke, (ed.), *Cultural Practice in Archaic Greece*, Cambridge, 1993.
- Earle, T.K., 'A Reappraisal of Redistribution: Complex Hawaiian Chiefdoms', in T.K.Earle and J.E.Erison ,(eds.), *Exchange System in Prehistory*, New York, 1977.
- Earle, Timothy, 'The Evolution of Chiefdom', *Current Anthropology*, vol. 30, no. 1, February 1998.
- Earle, Timothy, 'Chiefdom in Archaeological and Ethno Historical Perspective', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol.16, 1987.
- Earle, Timothy, 'The Evolution of Chiefdom', *Current Anthropology* , vol.30, no.1, 1998.
- Fracchia, Joseph and R.C.Lewontin, 'Does culture Evolve?' *History and Theory*, vol.38. No.4, Theme Issue 38: The return of Science: Evolutionary Ideas and History, December, 1999.
- Fried, Morton H., *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology*, Random House, New York, 1967.

- Fried, Morton, 'On the Evolution of Social Stratification and the State', in Stanley Diamond, (ed.), *Culture in History: Essays in Honour of Paul Rodin*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1960.
- Fried, Morton, *The Evolution of Political Society*, Random House, New York, 1967.
- Friedman, J. and M. J. Rowlands, (eds.), *The Evolution of Social Systems*, Duckworth.
- Friedman, J., 'Warfare, Military Organization and Evolution of Society', *Anthropologica*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1961.
- Galaty, John G. and Pierre Bonte, *Herders, Warriors and Traders: Pastoralism in Africa* Westview Press, San Francisco, and Oxford, 1991.
- Godelier, Maurice, 'Economy and Religion: an Evolutionary Optical Illusion', in J. Friedman and M.J.Rowlands, (eds.), *The Evolution of Social Systems*, Duckworth.
- Goldenweiser, A. A., 'The Origin of Totemism', *American Anthropologist, New Series*, vol.14, no.4, 1912.
- Govindaswamy, M.S., *The Role of Feudatories in Later Chola History*, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, 1979.
- Gupta, Dipankar, (ed.), *Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991.
- Gurukkal, Rajan, 'Aspects of Early Iron Age Economy: Problems of Agrarian Expansion of Tamilakam', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 42nd Session, Bodhgaya, 1981.
- Gurukkal, Rajan, 'The Agrarian System and Socio-Political Organisation under the Early Pandyas', An unpublished doctoral dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 1984.
- Gurukkal, Rajan., 'Forms of Production and Forces of Change in Ancient Tamil society', *Studies in History*, no.5, 1989.
- Gururaja Rao, B.K., *The Megalithic Culture in South India*, University of Mysore, Mysore, 1972.
- Gururajachar, S., *Some Aspects of Economic and Social Life in Karnataka (AD 1000-1300)*, Mysore, 1974.
- Habib, Irfan., 'The Peasant in Indian History', *Social Scientist*, vol.11, No.3, 1983.
- Hall, Kenneth, R. and Spencer, G.W., 'The Economy of Kancipuram: A Sacred Centre in Early South India', *Journal of Urban History*, vol. VI, no. 2, 1980.
- Hall, Kenneth, R., *Trade and Statecraft in the Age of the Colas*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1980.
- Hart, George L., 'Ancient Tamil Literature, its Scholarly Past and Future, in B. Stein, (ed.), *Essays on South India*, New Delhi, 1976.
- Hart, George L., *Poets of the Tamil Anthologies: Ancient Poems of Love and War*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1979.

- Heald, Suzette, 'Agricultural Intensification and the Decline of Pastoralism: A Case Study from Kenya', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. LXIX, No. 2, 1999.
- Heitzman, James, 'Temple Urbanism in Medieval South India,' *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 4, 1987.
- Herskovits, Melville J., 'The Cattle Complex in East Africa', *American Anthropologist, New Series*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, 1926.
- Jaiswal, S., 'Caste in the Socio-Economic Framework of Early India', Presidential Address, 38th Session, Bhuvaneswar, 1977.
- Jaiswal, Suvira., 'Varna Ideology and Social Change', *Social Scientist*, vol. 19, no. 314, 1991.
- Jha, D.N., 'Early Indian Feudalism: A Historiographical Critique', *Presidential Address*, Indian History Congress, 40th Session, Waltair, 1979.
- Jha, D.N., *Ancient India: In Historical Outline*, People Publishing House, New Delhi, 1977.
- Jha, D.N., *Feudal Social Formation in Early India*, Chanakya Publications, Delhi, 1987.
- Kailasapathy, K., *Tamil Heroic Poetry*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1968.
- Karashima, N., *South Indian History and Society, Studies from Inscriptions, AD 850-1800*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1984.
- Kasinathan, N. Natana., *Hero-Stones in Tamilnadu*, Arun Publications, Madras, 1978.
- Kasinathan, Natana, *Hero-Stones in Tamil Nadu*, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1978.
- Kosambi, D.D., *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956.
- Krader, Lawrence, 'The Origin of the State among the Nomads of Asia', in H.J.M.Claessan and P.Skalnik, (ed.), *The Early State*, Mouton, The Hague, 1978.
- Krader, Lawrence, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Sources, Development, and Critique in the Writings of Karl Marx*, Dialectical and Society, Assen. Van Gorcum, The Netherlands, 1975.
- Krishnan, K.G., 'Chittirameli-p-periyanadu-An Agricultural Guild of Medieval Tamil Nadu', *Journal of the Madras University*, vol.LVI, no. 1, 1982.
- Kulke, Herman, 'Fragmentation and Segmentation Versus Integration? Reflections on the concept of Indian Feudalism and the Segmentary State in Indian History', *Studies in History*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1982.
- Kurtz, Conald V. , 'Legitimation of Early Inchoate States', in Henri J.M. Claessen and S. Peter Skalnik, (ed.), *The Study of the State*, Mouton, The Hague, 1981.
- Lakshminarayanan, K., T. Gangadharan and N.Chandrasekar (eds.), *Salem City, an Ethnohistory (1792-1992)*, Sri Swarnambigai Printers, Salem, 1999.

- Lawrence, Leshnik, *South Indian Megalithic Burials, The Pandukal Complex*, Wiesbaden, 1974.
- Leary, Brendan O., *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Despotism, Historical Materialism and Indian History*, Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Little, Peter D., 'Social Differentiation and Pastoralist Sedenterization in Northern Kenya', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. LV, No. 3, 1985.
- Ludden, David, 'Ecological Zones and the Cultural Economy of Irrigation in Southern Tamil Nadu', *Journal of Asian Studies*, no.1, 1978
- Ludden, David, *Peasant History in South India*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1985.
- MacDonell, A.A., 'The Early History of Caste', *The American Historical Review*, vol.19, no. 2, 1914.
- Mahadevan, I., 'Corpus of Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions', in R. Nagasamy, (ed.), *Seminar on Inscriptions*, Madras, 1968.
- Mahadevan, I., 'The Ancient Name of Arikamedu', N. Subrahmanian, (ed.), *Surya Narayana Sastri Centenary Volume*, Madurai, 1970.
- Mahadevan, I., 'Identification of Kakandi in Bharhut Inscriptions', *Paper Presented at the International Seminar on Tamil Buddhism*, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras, 1992.
- Mahadevan, Iravatham, *Early Tamil Epigraphy: From the Earliest Times to the Sixth Century A.D.*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2003.
- Mahalingam, T.V., *The Mackenzie Manuscripts: Summaries of the Historical Manuscripts in the Mackenzie Collection (Tamil and Malayalam)*, vol. I, University of Madras, Madras, 1967.
- Maine, H.S., *Village Communities in the East and West*, London, 1871.
- Maloney, Clarence, 'Archaeology in South India: Accomplishments and Prospects,' in B. Stein, (ed.), *Essays on South India*, Vikas, New Delhi, 1976.
- Maloney, Clarence, 'Religious Beliefs and Social Hierarchy in Tamil Nadu, India', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 2, no.1, February, 1975.
- Maloney, Clarence, 'The Beginnings of Civilization in South India', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXIX, no. 3, 1970.
- Me Crindle, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Erythraean Sea and Ancient India as described by Ktesias*, The Knidian, Amsterdam, Calcutta (reprint), 1973.
- Meera Abraham, *Two Medieval Merchant Guilds of South India*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1988.
- Mencher, Joan P., 'Kerala and Madras: A Comparative Study of Ecology and Social Structure', *Ethnology*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1966.
- Mill, James, *History of British India*, London, 1817.

- Minakshi, C., *Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas*, University of Madras, Madras, 1977.
- Mines, Mattison., 'Models of Caste and the Left-Hand Division in south India', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1982.
- Moore Jr, B., 'The Relation Between Social Stratification and Social Control', *Sociometry*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1942.
- Morgan, Lewis Henry, *Ancient Society*, 1877.
- Mukhia, Harbans, (ed.), *The Feudalism Debate*, Manohar, New Delhi, 2000.
- Mukhia, Harbans, 'Was there Feudalism in Indian History', *Presidential Address*, Indian History Congress, Waltair, 1979.
- Nagaswamy, R., (ed.), *Seminar on Hero Stones*, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1974.
- Narayanan, M.G.S., 'Cattle Raiders in the Sangam Age', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 38th Session, Bhubaneswar, 1978.
- Narayanan, M.G.S., 'The Role of Peasants in the Early History of Tamilakam in south India', *Social Scientist*, vol. 16, no. 9, September, 1988.
- Narayanan, M.G.S., 'The Warrior Settlements of the Sangam Age', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 43rd Session, Kurukshetra, 1982.
- Narayanan, M.G.S., *Re-Interpretation of South Indian History*, College Book House, Trivandrum, 1977.
- Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., *A History of South India: From the Earliest Times to Vijayanagar*, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1959.
- Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., *The Colas*, University of Madras (reprint), Madras, 1975.
- Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., *The Pandyan Kingdom*, University of Madras, Madras, 1982.
- Nitecki, Matthew and Doris Nitecki, (ed.), *History and Evolution*, Albany, New York, 1922.
- Oliver, R., and B.M.Fagan, *Africa in the Iron Age*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975.
- Otterbein, Keith F., 'Warfare, Territorial Expansion, and Cultural Evolution', *American Ethnologist*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1976.
- Pandian, J. 'Political Emblems of Caste Identity: An Interpretation of Tamil Caste Titles', *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol.56, no.4, 1983.
- Parasher-Sen, Aloka., *Social and Economic History of Early Medieval Deccan, Some Interpretation*, Manohar, New Delhi, 1993.
- Perlin, Frank, 'Proto-industrialisation and Pre-colonial South Asia', *Past and Present*, vol. 92, 1983.
- Pillai, K.K., *A Social History of the Tamils*, University of Madras (reprint), Madras, 1969.

- Rajan, K., 'Iron and Gem Stone Industries as Revealed from Kodumanal Excavations', *Puratattva*, no. 20, 1989-90.
- Rajan, K., 'Muciri-Turaimukarn: Cila Putiya Ceitigal', *Avanam (Journal of the Tamil Nadu Archaeological Society)*, No. 4, 1994.
- Rajan, K., *Archaeology of Tamil Nadu (Kongu Country)*, Book India Publishing Co, Delhi, 1994.
- Rajan, K., *South Indian Memorial Stones*, Mano Pathippakam, Thanjavur, 2000.
- Rajanna, B., *Salem Encyclopedia: A Cultural and Historical Dictionary of Salem District, Tamilnadu*, Institute of Kongu Studies, Salem, 1992.
- Ramachandran, K.S., *A Bibliography of Indian Megaliths*, State Department of Archaeology, Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1971.
- Ramachandran, K.S., *Archaeology of South India: Tamil Nadu*, Sandeep Publications, Delhi, 1980.
- Ramaswamy, Durai., *The Surnames of Cankam Age, Literary and Tribes*, University of Madras, Madras, 1968.
- Ramaswamy, Vijaya, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1985.
- Sankalia, H.D., *Indian Archaeology Today*, New York, 1962.
- Schneider, H.K., 'The Subsistence Role of Cattle Among the Pokot in East Africa,' *American Anthropologist*, LIX, 1957.
- Seneviratne, Sudershan, 'Kalinga and Andhra: The Process of Secondary State Formation in Early India', in J. Claessen and P. Skalnik (eds.), *The Study of the State*, Moutan, The Hague, 1981.
- Service, E.R., *Origin of the State and Civilization*, Norton, New York, 1975.
- Service, E.R., *Primitive Social Organization*, Random House, New York, 1962.
- Service, Elman R, 'Classical and Modern Theories of the Origins of Government' in R.Cohen and E.R.Service (eds.), *Origins of the State*, Institute of the Studies of Human Issues, Philadelphia, 1978.
- Service, Elman R, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective*, Norton, New York, 1962.
- Sesha Aiyar, K.G., *Chera Kings of the Sangam Period*, LUZAC, 1937.
- Sharma, R.S., 'How Feudal was Indian Feudalism?', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 12, nos. 2&3, 1985.
- Sharma, R.S., 'Indian Feudalism Retouched', A Review Article, *Indian Historical Review*, vol.1, no.2, 1976.
- Sharma, R.S., 'Problem of Transition from Ancient to Medieval India in Indian History', *Indian Historical Review*, vol.1, 1974.

- Sharma, R.S., *Material Culture and Social Formation in Ancient India*, Macmillan, Delhi, 1988.
- Sharma, R.S., *Sudras in Ancient India*, Delhi, Motilal Banaridas, 1958.
- Sharma, R.S., 'The Kali Age: A Period of Crisis' in S.N.Mukherjee, (ed.), *Indian History and Thought: Essay in Honour of A.L.Basham*, Calcutta, 1982.
- Sivathamby, K., 'Early South Indian Society and Economy: The Tinai Concept', *Social Scientist*, vol. 29, 1974.
- Southall, Aidan, *Alur Society: A Study in Process and Tyoes of Domination*, Cambridge, 1956.
- Spencer, G.W., 'Religious Networks and Royal Influence in 11th Century South India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. XII, pt. 1, 1969.
- Spencer, G.W., 'The Politics of Plunder: The Cholas in Eleventh Century Ceylon', *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 35, 1976.
- Spencer, G.W., *The Politics of Expansion: The Chola Conquest of Sri Lanka and Sri Vijaya*, New Era, Madras, 1983.
- Spencer, Herbert., *The Principles of Biology*, New York and London, 1857.
- Srinivas, M.N., 'A note on Sanskritization and Westernization', *Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. XV, no. 4, 1956.
- Stein, Burton., 'The State and the Agrarian Order', in B. Stein, (ed.), *Essays on South India*, Vikas Publications, New Delhi, 1976.
- Stein, Burton., *Peasant State and Society in Medieval South India*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1980.
- Stein, Burton., 'The Segmentary State in South Indian History', in Richard Fox, (ed.), *Realm and Region in Traditional India*, New Delhi, 1977.
- Subbarayalu, Y., *Political Geography of the Chola Country*, State Department of Archeology, Tamil Nadu, Madras, 1973.
- Subrahmanian, N., *Pre-Pallavan Tamil Index (Index of the Historical Material in Pre-Pallavan Tamil Literature)*, University of Madras, Madras, 1966.
- Taggart, Donald, 'The Reality of Urbanism', *Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. VI, no. 2, 1965.
- Thapar, R., *Cultural Transaction and Early India: Tradition and Patronage*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1987.
- Thapar, R., *From Lineage to State*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1984.
- Thavaraj, M.J..K., 'The Concept of Asiatic Mode of Productions: Its Relevance to Indian History', *Social Scientist*, vol. 12, No.7, 1984.
- Thorner, Marx Daniel., 'Marx on India and the Asiatic Mode of Production', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, no. 9, 1966.
- Tokarev, S.A., 'The Problem of Totemism as Seen by Soviet Scholars', *Current Anthropology*, vol.7, no.2, 1966.

- Veluthat, Kesavan, *The Political Structure of Early Medieval South India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993.
- Veluthat, Kesavan., 'The Temple Base of the Bhakti Movement in South India', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 40th Session*, Waltair, 1979.
- Wickham, Chris., 'Problems of Comparing Rural Societies in Early Medieval Western Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 2, 1992.
- Winans, Edgar V., 'The Political Context of Economic Adaptation in the Southern Highland of Tanganyika', *American Anthropologist, New Series*, Vol. LXVII, No. 2, 1965.
- Wittfogel, K.A., *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, 7th ed, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1970.
- Wright, Henry T., 'Recent Research on the Origin of the State', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 6, 1977.
- Yadava, B.N.S., 'Immobility and Subjugation of Indian Peasantry in Early Medieval Complex', *Indian Historical Review*, vol. I, no. 1, 1974.
- Yadava, B.N.S., 'The Accounts of Kali Age and the Social Transformation Antiquity to Middle Age', *Indian Historical Review*, vol. V, no. 1-2, 1978-79.
- Yadava, B.N.S., 'The Problems of the Emergence of Feudal Relations in Early India', *Presidential Address*, Indian History Congress, 41st Session, Bombay, 1980.
- Yadava, B.N.S., Book review article on R.S.Sharma, 'Indian Feudalism', *Indian Historical Review*, vol.7, 1980-81.
- Zvelebil, Kamil V., *The Smile of Murugan: On the Tamil Literature of South India*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1973.